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AND MODERN THOUGHT

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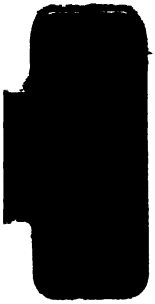

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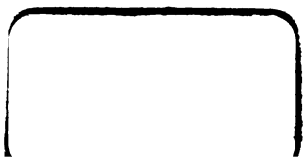

THE CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT

THE CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT

AN INQUIRY INTO THE GROUNDS OF UNBELIEF AND AN APPEAL FOR CANDOUR

BY

PHILIP VIVIAN

"Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely."—MACAULAY.

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TO

MY WIFE AND CHILDREN

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PREFACE

WHAT does a man seek when he examines his religious creed? To this question Canon Liddon replies as follows:—"He seeks intellectual satisfaction and moral support. His intellect asks for reliable information upon certain subjects of the most momentous importance. How does he come here? Whither is he going? What is the purpose and drift of the various forms of existence around him? Above all, what is the nature, what are the attributes and dispositions, of that Being to whom the highest yearnings of his inmost self constantly point as the true object of his existence? In asking that the answers to these questions shall be definite, that what is certain shall be affirmed as certain, what is doubtful as doubtful, what is false as false, he is only asking that his religious information shall be presented in as clear and practical a shape as his information on other subjects. In no department of human knowledge is haziness deemed a merit; by nothing is an educated mind more distinguished than by a resolute effort to mark the exact frontiers of its knowledge and its ignorance; to hesitate only when hesitation is necessary; to despair of knowledge only when knowledge

is ascertainably out of reach. Surely on the highest and most momentous of all subjects this same precision may be asked for with reverence and in reason; surely the human mind is not bound to forget its noblest instincts when it approaches the throne and presence of its Maker?" (*Some Elements of Religion*, p. 24.)

Again, in his New Year's message for 1905, the Archbishop of Canterbury condemns indifference to truth as a vice, and "drifting along the current of popular opinion" as a sin. He invites and persuades us to use "the sadly-neglected powers and privileges of rational thought and common sense."

The duty of thinking, therefore, is now recognised by the Church—it was not formerly. But what will be the result of this thinking? In his book, *The Hearts of Men*, Mr. Fielding tells us that "no man has ever sat down calmly unbiassed to reason out his religion, and not ended by rejecting it." Mr. Fielding adds: "The great men, who have been always religious, do not invalidate what I say.....There is no assumption more fallacious than that, because a man is a keen reasoner on one subject, he is also on another. Men who are strictly religious, who believe in their faith, whatever their faith may be, consider it above proof, beyond argument.....It is emotion, not reason; feeling, not induction." (*The Hearts of Men*, pp. 142–8.)

Does not this deep and sympathetic writer furnish us with a true picture of men's hearts? What if,

after exercising their privileges of rational thought and common sense, the majority of men find that Christianity no longer gives them either intellectual satisfaction or moral support? What if they finally arrive at the conclusion that Christianity and all supernatural beliefs are but the survival of primitive superstitions which can no longer bear the light of modern knowledge? These are the grave questions which now confront us.

A man may enter, and generally does enter, upon his inquiry biassed in favour of religious belief of some kind. He approaches the subject in a reverent frame of mind. In his private prayers to his God he does not neglect to ask for heavenly guidance. He evinces precisely the spirit which a divine would consider becoming. But as his inquiry proceeds there comes a time when his religious bias disappears—when he can no longer feel what he could honestly call reverence. He discovers that what he thought was known, and had actually been revealed, is unknown. How can he believe in and worship the Unknown? More than ever he feels his own insignificance and ignorance; but the feeling thus excited, while akin to awe, is divested of reverence. Pursuing his search far enough, he succeeds in extricating himself from a quagmire of demonstrably false superstitions. Finally he reaches solid ground, and builds his life upon it.

Unfortunately, many never pursue their inquiry up to this stage; they become fearful, or they give it up

as a hopeless entanglement, or they find they have not the requisite leisure. Perhaps, therefore, the information gained by one of the more fortunate may be of some little service to others. It will be my endeavour to set forth in this book not only the destructive, but also the constructive, results of a search for truth.

P. V.

January, 1906.

THE SITUATION

Chapter I.

THE GRAVITY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

§ 1. *The Truth of the Matter.*

Before entering upon an inquiry into religious unbelief, we need to form a correct estimate of its prevalence. If, as many would have us think, there is nothing unusual in the present situation, if the age of faith is returning,[1] it is hardly worth while to enter upon this inquiry at all. If, on the other hand, the forces hostile to the Christian faith differ essentially from those that stirred up waves of scepticism in the past—if there is overwhelming evidence that belief among educated men is fast decaying, it is surely high time to investigate the grounds of unbelief, and to welcome the fullest discussion concerning the best means of dealing with an entirely new and extremely grave situation. It is only the shortest-sighted policy that would shelve a disagreeable question until mischief had occurred. It is better to face the facts. From every point of view, concealment regarding a question of such vital importance as the truth of Christianity is to be deplored; while an attitude of indifference on a subject that should be of surpassing interest to us all can only be characterised as amazing—unless, indeed, the real explanation be that men have ceased to believe.

[1] As the Rev. John A. Hutton attempts to show in the *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1905.

We must, then, determine, in the first place, whether we are witnessing simply a wave of scepticism that will shortly subside again, or whether the present situation in the religious world is altogether unprecedented. The truth of the matter will best be learnt from the lips of those to whom pessimistic admissions must be peculiarly distressing, and who would therefore be the last either to raise a false alarm or to be guilty of an exaggeration. The Bishop of London has warned us[1] that "the truth of the matter really is that all over Europe a great conflict is being fought between the old faith in a supernatural revelation and a growing disbelief in it." The Bishop of Salisbury lately[2] said: "There has been revealed to us the terrible and painful fact that a great many are giving up public worship, and that a large proportion of the people of England pay little attention to religion at all." Not long ago Lord Hugh Cecil expressed[3] the same opinion in the following words: "On all sides there are signs of the decay of the Faith. People do not go to church, or, if they go, it is for the sake of the music, or for some non-religious motive. The evidence is overwhelming that the doctrines of Christianity have passed into the region of doubt." From Dr. Horton we learn that "vast numbers of people in England to-day have forsaken the best and highest ideal of life known to them before they have found a better and higher..... While Professor Haeckel and Professor Ray Lankester

[1] In his address at the London Diocesan Conference in April, 1904.
[2] When addressing a conference of clergy and Church workers at Blandford on September 7th, 1905.
[3] In the course of one of those remarkable orations of his which always command the thoughtful attention of the House. The speech was reported in the newspapers of March 15th, 1904.

do in their way offer an alternative, and present to us the solution of the great enigma according to their light, the bulk of people in our day surrender the old and tried ideal, fling it aside, assume that it is discredited, live without it, and make no serious attempt to find a better ideal."[1]

Are there not indications, moreover, everywhere in the literature of the day? The works of some of our greatest scholars are either covertly or openly agnostic. The more thoughtful of our magazines, such as the *Nineteenth Century*, *Fortnightly Review*, *Hibbert Journal*, *Independent Review*, etc., are continually publishing articles which teem with heterodoxy. The "Do We Believe?" correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph* (not to mention the more recent controversies in the *Standard*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily News*) was without precedent, and highly significant of the present state of religious unrest. In a lecture reported in the *Tablet*, Father Gerard voiced the growing feeling of apprehension when he referred to the "Do We Believe?" controversy and the "amazing success" of the Rationalist Press Association as indicating a situation of "the utmost gravity, as gravely disquieting as any with which in her long career the Church has ever been confronted." Also it may be noticed that organised efforts have commenced all over England to answer inquiries concerning the truth of Christianity by means of apologetic literature and lectures. What do these inquiries portend? The reply is given in the warning of the Rev. Mark Pattison in his essay on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England." "When an age," he says, "is

[1] See Dr. Horton's letter to the *Daily News*, August 23rd, 1905.

found occupied in proving its creed, this is but a token that the age has ceased to have a proper belief in it."

Whichever way we turn the same spectacle confronts us. In France and Italy especially perhaps, and also in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Spain, America, the Argentine (where the *men* are practically all agnostics), Nicaragua, and Ecuador, freethought is making rapid progress. Only in Russia, where ninety per cent. of the population are uneducated, is the growth small and confined to the "intellectuals." Never in the world's history has there been so much disbelief in the "supernatural"; and, with the advance of science and education, this disbelief appears likely to be one day almost universal. Militant Rationalism is jubilant; while the pastor of the Theistic Church[1] proclaims: "I see a battle coming. I do not, like Froude, predict that it will be fought once more, as of old, in blood and tears; but I am as certain as I am of to-morrow's dawn that a mighty conflict is at hand which will revolutionise the religious thought and feeling of Christendom."

It is sheer folly for the Church to comfort herself with the reflection that this is not the first time in the history of Christianity that disbelief has manifested itself. In the early days of the Church the heretic was not in possession of the knowledge that we have since acquired. He could not support his views, as he can now, with the facts of science.[2] At every step

[1] The Rev. Charles Voysey, in a sermon preached at the Theistic Church, Swallow Street, on February 5th, 1905.

[2] Even in the early eighteenth century the light of science had hardly got beyond the first glimmering of dawn. Mathematics and astronomy were the only sciences which had passed into the positive and final stage. Chemistry, geology, biology, historical criticism, were not yet in a position to speak with authority even on subjects in

he could be met by arguments which he had no adequate means of refuting, and if he dared to deny the "supernatural" there was an enormous preponderance of public opinion against him. Indeed, he himself generally believed in the "supernatural," though he was sceptical of the particular evidence of it on which Christianity had been founded. Retarded by Christianity itself—or, shall we say, by its interpreters?—knowledge was unable to advance; it receded, and the clock was put back in scientific research. Darkness reigned supreme for over a thousand years. At last the dawn began to break. What was the result? The children of light suffered for their temerity; but their ideas were eventually absorbed, and beliefs were suitably reformed. Thus the Copernican system was gradually accepted, and so were the discoveries, which followed,[1] up to fifty

their own province. Read a popular apologetic work of the eighteenth century; read *Truth and Certainty of Christian Revelation*, edition 1724, and you will find that a defender of the faith had in those days a comparatively easy task. Science being in its infancy, Dr. Samuel Clarke gave reasons for the truth of Christian dogmas, which, though they could not be controverted then, would now be considered the most abject nonsense. Read also Mr. S. Laing's remarks on p. 18 of *A Modern Zoroastrian*, where he tells us that when he was "a student at Cambridge, little more than fifty years ago, astronomy was the only branch of natural science which could be said to be definitely brought within the domain of natural law, and that only as regards the law of gravity and the motions of the heavenly bodies, for little or nothing was known as to their constitution."

[1] Copernicus's book, *The Revolution of the Celestial Bodies*, was printed a few days before his death, in 1543. The system was condemned by a decree of Pope Paul V., in 1616, which was not revoked till 1818 by Pius VII. The great Kepler (d. 1630) was an astrologer as well as astronomer, and thought the stars were guided by angels. While his mind had a strong grasp of positive scientific truth, it also had an irresistible tendency towards mystical speculation. In those days Science and Religion were easily reconciled. It was fortunate for Newton that he made his discovery of the law of gravitation in a rather more enlightened age and country, otherwise he would inevitably have shared the fate of Giordano Bruno at the hands of the Church's emissaries. Just now it is the fashion to say

years ago. Then, however, the established beliefs received shock after shock in rapid succession—shocks from which they do not yet show any promise of recovering. The myriads of worlds in the processes of birth and death; the vast antiquity[1] of the earth; the long history of man and his animal origin; the reign of natural law, and the consequent discredit of the supernatural; the suspicions aroused by the study of comparative mythology; the difficulties of "literal inspiration"; the doubt thrown by the Higher Criticism on many cherished beliefs—these and the like have shaken the very foundations of our faith, and are the cause of agnosticism among the vast majority of our leaders of thought and science.

Ecclesiastics, however, with certain notable exceptions, appear to be labouring under the delusion that a reconciliation has taken place of late between Religion and Science, and that the voice of the Higher Criticism has been hushed—at least, they are continually assuring us to this effect. They remain under this delusion for two reasons. Firstly, because they are more or less ignorant of science and of the preponderating opinion of the scientific world concerning the truth of Christianity. Secondly, because

that Haeckel and men of science generally have no business to depart from their own particular domain and meddle with theology. It is interesting, therefore, to note here that they have a precedent for their conduct in the great Sir Isaac Newton, whose most remarkable theological production was his *Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of the Scripture*. Why should not a scientist be deeply interested in theology? He may make mistakes, but who can point out more clearly than he where Science and Theology clash?

[1] "It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that 500 to 1,000 million years may have elapsed since the birth of the moon" (see Professor Darwin's Presidential Address at the meeting of the British Association in Johannesburg on August 30th, 1905).

they are lulled into a feeling of security through misconceptions regarding the attitude of the laity. There appears to be the same, or nearly the same, average of religious conformity as heretofore, and the consensus of opinion seems to be all on the side of church and chapel. Any falling off in religious fervour is attributed to sheer carelessness rather than to unbelief. From the days of Huxley until quite lately there have been no attacks upon Christianity worth mentioning. The Churches fail to realise that this religious conformity and goodwill towards the Christian faith have generally no connection whatever with a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and that, where there is this conviction, it is usually among those who are ignorant of the chief causes for suspicion. I propose, therefore, in the first instance, to examine some of the more usual types among the laity. Obviously, in doing so I shall be omitting a great many shades of thought. I shall say very little about the opinions of the genuine believer or of the hopelessly thoughtless, and nothing of the opinions of evil-livers. My object is to set forth the types which are most likely to have been misunderstood by the clergy.

§ 2. *The Attitude of the Laity.*

Let us commence, then, with the sceptical. *They are not inclined, for the present at least, to propagate their views.* Rightly or wrongly, they still hold the popular opinion that, while they themselves can dispense with belief, the masses cannot. All that is asked of a "cultured" man is that he keep his opinion to himself. He may be an agnostic or —whether he realises it or not—practically an

atheist; but he must not think of calling himself by such ugly names. "The uneducated freethinker," our modern philosopher will say, "manifests a Philistine Voltaireanism—a spirit now disapproved by scholars and philosophers who regard with serious consideration all the manifestations and products of human thought, from the earliest fetichism to the most recent developments of that religious tendency which appears to be a constitutional element in man." Such high thoughts, according to this philosopher, are not for the common herd, who must continue to wallow in their ignorance, feeding on husks, which, however unsuitable for his own refined digestion, will serve well enough to nourish the religious instincts of the masses.

If of a mystical turn of mind, he will tell you that Christianity, like all other religions, may be but a symbol of a great Reality; and this person, though sceptical regarding the Christian dogmas, will possibly consider himself a Christian. Or, again, he may be without any leaning towards mysticism, and merely hold that religion, *if sincere*, is better for the mind than scepticism. "Better a belated and imperfect religion," he will say, "than none at all. The heart has its claims on our consideration as well as the intellect. Study Comte's *General View of Positivism*."

Many agnostics are just as firmly convinced as believers that their country's prosperity is bound up with the Christian belief.[1] This is largely due to

[1] This conviction is expressed in a famous speech by Lord Beaconsfield before a Diocesan Conference at Oxford in 1864, of which the following are extracts: "On the acceptance of those (Divine) truths all sound and salutary legislation depends. They are the only security for civilisation, and the only guarantee of real progress." Speaking of a "Church without any distinctive creeds of its own," he says:

their still clinging to the Church's teaching concerning belief and morals.[1] It is well to remember, however, that the feeling on this point of the average cultured Frenchman or Italian is quite the opposite. The measures now being taken by the French Government against the clergy are based upon the contention that the Church's influence is injurious to the State's welfare; and this feeling has reached such a pitch that Republican employees hardly dare admit their attendance at divine worship.[2] During

"Dangerous in all countries, it would be still more dangerous in England." "The very Church itself would lead the way to a dissolution of manners and morals, and prepare the tomb of this Empire as it has prepared the tomb of others in the ages that have gone."

[1] The proposition that without a belief in Christian dogmas there can be no belief in Christian ethics, and hence no national righteousness, is one with which we are all familiar through clerical repetition. Thus, in the *National Review* for March, 1905, there is an article by the Rev. W. Barry, D.D., on "Agnosticism and National Decay," which is full of assertions and dire forebodings to this effect. The matter is discussed in the last two chapters of this book.

[2] The French Cardinals have now (March, 1905) addressed a lengthy letter to President Loubet, in which they point out that the suppression of the Concordat of 1801 will lead the Republic to a state of moral and social disorganisation, and urge honest men to the violences of revolution. The chief objection to this forecast is that at present there are no signs of such a result. On the contrary, in Italy there has been a marked regeneration since the Church was forced to relax its hold on the country. Similarly, M. Plichon, during the debate on the Separation of Church and State Bill in the French Chamber, maintained that "a country could not live without morality, *and consequently it could not live without religion.* That was why Napoleon had made the Concordat." Is this correct? For Bonaparte himself the Concordat was important, as giving him, through the clergy, an influence over the peasantry, upon which he depended for his armies; also as in some degree welding together, through the ubiquitous influence of the clergy, the different States which were already subject to his government. There is a well-known saying attributed to Napoleon to the effect that, if there had been no Pope, he would have had to invent one. Why? In the interests of morals or to further his schemes of conquest? Thoughtful men are beginning to see the hideousness and folly of war. Thirst for "glory" at the expense of untold human misery is estimated by them at its true worth. To lend her support has often been the *rôle* of the Church; but, needless to say, it neither redounds to her credit nor is it an argument in favour of an alliance between Church and State.

September, 1904, the Italian Government extended a cordial welcome to a Freethought Congress, and the proceedings were opened by the Minister of Public Instruction. But the average Englishman, be he ever so sure of the falsity of the Christian dogmas, can foresee nothing but immorality and anarchy[1] as the result of the overthrow of Christianity. "*Cui bono?*" "*Quo vadis?*" he cries. "Leave well alone!" "It is easy enough to show that Christianity is false, but what have you to put in its place? What we want now is construction, not criticism and the flogging of a dying creed." He forgets, it seems to me, that people cannot be hoodwinked for ever, and that, as Mr. Froude tells us, the Reformation was "brought about by people refusing any longer to believe a lie." In addition to this concern for the public weal, the sceptic is influenced by motives[2] of expediency. He is well aware of the odium he would incur should he proclaim his heterodox views[3] concerning the popular religion. Such publicity might spoil his professional career, be the death-blow of his ambitions, cause him considerable pecuniary loss, alienate the friends he most values, and, worst of all,

[1] This fallacy is exposed in Chap. VII., § 3, and Chap. VIII., § 2.

[2] In an article, "On Religious Conformity," by Mr. G. M. Trevelyan, appearing in the *Independent Review* for December, 1904, the motives for religious conformity are dealt with at some length, and the extent of insincerity exposed. A book entitled *The Religion of the Twentieth Century*, by Joseph McCabe, will also repay a careful perusal.

[3] Nor is it easy for even a well-known man to get his heterodox views published where they will be widely read. Sir Hiram Maxim wrote lately to the *Literary Guide* concerning his letter in the "Do We Believe?" correspondence, saying "it was necessary for my letter to have a slight coating of ecclesiastical sugar, otherwise it would not have been published." Does the Church realise the extent to which men of science coat their popular writings with "ecclesiastical sugar"?

destroy the happiness of his home life. For these and similar reasons we find, in the case of the half-believer, that he does not care to verify his doubts, but prefers to leave his opinions vague enough to be able to call himself a broad-minded Christian. Whether half-believing or distinctly agnostic, he usually holds that very common opinion regarding women, children, and religion—that, however little store a man may set by belief, it is wise to encourage it in the women folk, and also to hand over the children to them for their religious instruction. Besides, militant agnosticism is not the fashion. It is looked upon as "bad form," or as smacking of socialism. Indifference is much the easier attitude.

Or, again, the average man is disposed to trust to the progress of science and the ultimate triumph of truth, and sees no reason why he should make any effort towards shortening the period of transition.[1] In his contempt for the efforts of the "lowly born" and indigent secularists, he forgets that the biggest changes in the world's history have been brought about from the smallest beginnings by these very "lower orders" he affects to despise. In our own times, was it not working men who first set in motion a revolution that will eventually reform Russia? Perhaps the commonest attitude of "the man in the street," whatever his manner of belief may be, is one of good-natured indifference—an acquiescence in things as they are. Absence of the critical spirit or of anxious-mindedness, or of both, renders it easy for him to take things as he finds them, much after the manner of his primeval ancestors. His mind will not occupy itself

[1] That there is danger, however, in delay, is shown in the last chapter of this book.

with aught but the present. Naturally, too, he feels very strongly that what appears to make others happy should not be disturbed. In all this he makes various questionable assumptions, which I am considering in subsequent chapters of this book.

It is unnecessary to refer to the opinions of the militant agnostic, as this type could never be accused of deceiving the Church. However, it may be noted that Mr. Blatchford says, in the *Clarion* of February 3rd, 1905: "So far as I am concerned, I attacked religion because I believe it to be untrue, and because it seems to me to bar the way to liberty and happiness. The attack upon religion is a part of a task I have set myself." There are statesmen and other persons of influence who are as incredulous as Mr. Blatchford as to the truth of Christianity; but they do not, apparently, hold that Christianity bars the way to liberty and happiness (I give them credit for being ruled by the highest motives), and so the Church has their support. It is a weird arrangement between Unbelief and Belief, which cannot possibly last much longer; meanwhile, it tends to confuse and delay the answer to that gravest of questions: "Is Christianity true?"

Leaving the sceptic, let us examine another extremely common type—the man who is under the impression that he is a Christian without either being particularly devout or having inquired at all deeply into the grounds of his faith. He is ignorant of the causes for doubt, because he has not had, or has not cared to afford, any time for such matters. I do not refer so much to the masses, who obviously have very little leisure, but to the more leisured and influential classes —the classes a parson would call cultured, and who

are at any rate as cultured as himself. Such a man's scientific education, if he ever had any, was broken off early in life. A large proportion of those all-important years of his boyhood were devoted probably to an unwilling study of the "humanities." His faith is decidedly vague, and, according to his own peculiar interpretation, an adjustment between his heavenly aspirations and his earthly inclinations. It has never been thought out, and is not the result of a thorough study of its tenets. He was born and bred a Christian, and all the nicest people he knows are Christians, or he thinks they are. He is, all unconsciously, a social chameleon taking his colour from the conditions in the midst of which he happens to live. He, too, like his heterodox brother, sneers at organised Freethought in this country, because it owes its inception and conduct chiefly to poor and lowly men, forgetting that it was from such a source that the mighty creed of Christendom itself arose. He forgets that the first Christian apostles were mostly working men. If he has heard or read anything of a scèptical nature, he has never stopped to inquire any further into it. He has no idea that the central features of the Bible have been attacked by men of the greatest learning and integrity, with the result that even the defenders of the faith ask for "a reverent agnosticism as to the historical circumstances out of which, in the first instance, belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ arose."[1] Not knowing that the essentials are called in question, he sees no reason to trouble himself about mere details. It is enough for him that he feels sure that there must be

[1] See Chap. II., § 8.

some object in our existence, and that there must be a First Cause. It never occurs to him to consider whether his and the Christian conception of God can be reconciled. For him the truth of the Christian dogma is proved sufficiently by the unsatisfying nature of materialism. Has he not been taught that he must have faith, and that faith is a feeling of trust divinely implanted, and not needing to be fed on evidences? Is not Christianity the civilising agent of the world, and the origin of all morality and all good works?[1] Does not scepticism lead to atheism? If thought only leads to disbelief in God, he for one is not going to think.

In addition to the now fast dwindling band of sincere and thoughtful Christians there are, of course, many professing religionists who do think a little, a very little, on religious subjects; but the bulk of the male element are absolutely indifferent to the question of religion at all. The average subaltern is as good a sample of the latter type as any other. Speak to him about religion, and he is unutterably bored. A certain amount of church-going forms part of his ordinary round of duties. This is the sum-total of his "religious experiences." For the rest, religion, or any question as to its truth in this or that particular, is, so far as he is concerned, a matter of supreme indifference.

People are usually (though less so now perhaps than formerly) so careful to keep their thoughts about religion to themselves that it is no wonder the Church is ignorant of the extent to which heterodoxy is rife. The colossal hypocrisy which speaks of "the reserve of Englishmen about their religion" needs exposure.

[1] These sophisms are exposed later on.

Why should there be this dislike to talk upon religion—a religion which, if true, should make all worldly affairs sink into infinitesimal insignificance? Is it from a spirit of reverence, or is it not rather because the interpretations of God's alleged revelation differ so widely that people neither wish to "give themselves away" by stating their own interpretations, nor to hear the distasteful interpretations of others? If they were perfectly straightforward, they would run the danger both of hurting the feelings and falling in the estimation of their friends.

Sometimes there is a dread of appearing ridiculous, sometimes a dislike of appearing to cant. Yet surely, if we believe what we profess, there is nothing to be ashamed of, and we ought openly to testify to our faith. I can speak from personal experience when I say that the believing heathen of India, whether Hindoos, Mussulmans, or Parsees, have no qualms on this score. They see no necessity for "reserve" in the profession of their faith. They testify to it openly at all times and in all places.[1] It forms, as it ought, an integral part of their every-day life.

[1] While waiting in the big pavilion for the Coronation Durbar, I remember being struck with the fact that the whole Durbar was delayed simply because some Mohammedan rajahs had first to complete certain religious ceremonies on that day. I found myself comparing this with a notice informing Europeans that a tent capable of accommodating about one hundred persons was set apart for divine service during the week; and, although there were many thousands of Christians present in the Delhi camp, I felt pretty sure there was plenty of room in that tent. I do not mean to say that there may not be a considerable amount of pretence and selfishness in all this religious display among non-Christians. Just as domestic servants are not particularly encouraged by their mistress to take part in an early celebration of the Holy Eucharist, although she herself considers it of considerable importance for her own spiritual welfare, so the devout Mohammedan or Hindoo, who is rich enough, will rigidly keep the fasts laid down by his creed, knowing all the time

This so-called "reserve" is also occasioned by the inability to live up to the ethical ideals demanded by our creed. Men wish neither to be hypocrites nor to be thought hypocrites. It is an inherent fault in Christian ethics that certain portions are not practicable. "If we mechanically applied, as rules of conduct, Christ's ideals of temper, we are certain, from common sense, that universal pauperism, lawlessness, and national extinction would follow."[1] Then, again, there is too much of the presumption that all men have an equal chance in the battle against temptations, and too little acknowledgment of the part played by heredity and environment; and thus the root of the evil is overlooked. Again, if we have a strong "conviction of sin," which, according to our spiritual advisers, is essential, and if we cannot hope to shake off the burden of sin by our own unaided endeavours, our moral fibre is weakened, and we cease to cultivate the all-important qualities of self-reliance and self-respect.

Whatever the many causes of this "proud reserve" may be, one of the consequences is that we remain in ignorance of our neighbours' beliefs. If people discussed religious matters among themselves, they would make some surprising discoveries. The agnostic would find that "believers" are not the hypocrites he sometimes puts them down to be, for he would learn, to his surprise, that they are supremely ignorant

that it is a sheer impossibility for the coolie to abstain from food and drink (abstention from drinking water or any liquid is a special feature of his fasts) during the whole of the long tropical day. Yet are not the souls of domestic servants and coolies every whit as valuable as those of their wealthier masters?

[1] Quoted from *What it is to be a Christian*, a pamphlet written by the Ven. J. M. Wilson, D.D.

of much that he assumed they would be sure to know. The believer would find that there are many more agnostics than he had ever dreamt there were, and he would also learn that their reason for abandoning belief was of a very different nature from what he had supposed.

When agnostics read the lessons in church, as they frequently do, and when, with their aid and the aid of others in various stages of heterodoxy, congregations in church and chapel on Sunday only amount to twenty-two per cent.[1] of the population, and these chiefly women,[2] what must not be the sum-total of agnosticism, heterodoxy, and indifference among *men* in this most Christian of nations? The extent of unavowed or unconscious scepticism far exceeds that which is openly avowed or consciously felt. Laxity in keeping the Sabbath is now notoriously on the increase. Nothing can be more sensible than that people who have slaved for six days in the atmosphere of the office, etc., should go off for their "week end's" golf, etc.; but for the clergy to attribute the consequent falling-off in church attendance solely to the extra facilities of travel tempting people to carelessness about religion is to adopt the method of the proverbial ostrich in the desert at the approach of a dreaded

[1] Eighteen per cent. was the figure given by the Bishop of London, speaking of "Londoners," in his speech at the annual meeting of the Bishop of London's Fund in 1904; but, according to the strict results of the census, the figure for London is twenty-two or twenty-three per cent. of the total population.

[2] As Mr. Fielding says in his book, *The Hearts of Men* (pp. 217–8): "To one coming to Europe after years in the East and visiting churches, nothing is more striking than the enormous preponderance of women there. It is immaterial whether the church be in England or France, whether it be Anglican or Roman Catholic or Dissenter. The result is always the same—women outnumber the men as two to one, as three to one, sometimes as ten to one."

enemy. Unbelief and the advance of rationalism are really at the bottom of this new development; for all the carelessness, all the temptations in the world, would not persuade sane people to throw away their claims to eternal happiness by neglect to worship their God—a God that *demands* this worship. How little do the clergy really know, or attempt to know, of the beliefs of the cultured portion of their congregations! As I write these words I receive, curiously enough, a letter which shows how unusual it is for the pastor to question his flock. The writer of the letter, a lady, says: "Isn't Mr. X (the rector of a certain country parish) a *gauche* man? Mr. Z (an influential parishioner) didn't go to Holy Communion, and so Mr. X asked him if he had been confirmed. Since then Mr. Z goes elsewhere to church." Now, personally, I admire X's courage. What he did would not be done by the ordinary run of parsons. If they did that sort of thing, they would soon become exceedingly unpopular in the neighbourhood, and lose most of their fashionable and opulent congregation. But they would begin to learn the true state of affairs. They would learn, for instance, that some of the most regular and respectable of the male portion of their congregations were agnostic or heterodox, and that their attendance at divine worship was merely to set a good example to the "lower orders," or to please their women-folk, or for some cause or other utterly unconnected with any desire to worship or any belief in the efficacy of so doing. There is doubtless a great deal to be said in favour of a spirit of toleration which inculcates non-interference with a man's belief; but it all helps to hide the true state of affairs, and is surely overdone when it encourages men to attend a

service where they are acting a part and making solemn declarations untruthfully.

There is one more type of person I should include among the many strange buttresses of the Church—namely, the person who refuses point blank to be enlightened. The Churches have been lulled into a sense of security by many causes, but chief among them, perhaps, there stands out the fact that people not only will not take the trouble to inquire into the grounds of their faith, but consider that it would be positively wicked to do any such thing. To such I can only repeat the words of the Rev. J. W. Diggle, now Bishop of Carlisle. "There are," he says, "perhaps, few things, and certainly nothing of similar moment, about which men give themselves so little trouble, and take such little pains, as the ascertainment, by strict examination, of the foundations and the evidences of their religion. Hence so many religious persons are like children who have not learned things accurately. They are fearful of being questioned, and are out of temper in an examination." However, as an excuse for this timidity—for it is often nothing else—it must be conceded that a deep study of the evidences does, more often than not, end in agnosticism. This gives rise to the serious question: "If it is God who assists us to remain staunch to our creed, why does he so often forsake us, just when we are trying to lead more thoughtful lives and, consequently, study more deeply the faith we profess?" On the one hand, we find that modern agnosticism is not the result of carelessness, but of thoughtfulness. On the other hand, we observe that the Church numbers among some of its firmest adherents not only those who are ignorant through circumstances over which

they have no control, or through thoughtlessness, but also those who remain ignorant through fear to inquire.

§ 8. *Christianity and Science not Reconciled.*

Has the Church, then, been deceived in her impression that a reconciliation has taken place between Christianity and Science? Most certainly. I grant that to some extent there exists a patched-up peace. The modern apologist no longer adopts the unwise course of maintaining every strange phenomenon to be miraculous as long as it is unexplained, whereby each advance of physical science used necessarily to be hostile to theology. He even goes further, and says that the Resurrection and all the miracles may be only the manifestation of some law which is as yet beyond the analysis of our short experience. But, as I shall show later on, the new interpretations tone down hostility in one respect only to raise fresh and greater difficulties in another.

The manner in which misunderstandings occur on the subject of a reconciliation is well seen when we look into one of the Church's most popular arguments in its favour—the appeal to the pronouncement by Lord Kelvin in support of a Creative Power. Lord Kelvin assured the world that modern biologists were "coming to the belief in the existence of a vital principle."[1] That this pronouncement raised a perfect storm of protest in the world of science is wholly ignored by the world of religion. Suppose,

[1] As a matter of fact, no distinguished leader among modern biologists has come to any such conclusion. People are apt to forget that, while Lord Kelvin is undoubtedly one of the most distinguished living physicists, he is not himself a biologist.

however, that the consensus of opinion had been otherwise, what conclusion could we draw? We simply obtain an argument for some form of Theism. The probability of the existence of a Creative Power would not in itself prove the truth of the Christian dogmas, although it would be a very necessary link in the chain of evidence. It is extremely doubtful whether any scientist or philosopher really holds the doctrine of a personal God, certainly not of the anthropomorphic God of Christianity. Let us take Sir Oliver Lodge, for example. He is continually being held up to us by the Church as an instance of a man of science who finds himself able to believe in the supernatural; but does the Church claim him as one of her fold? In the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1904, he makes out a strong case for the entire re-interpretation of the Christian doctrine, in which, among other dogmas, the Atonement and Virgin-birth are completely surrendered. He has never yet professed belief in a personal God, and seems to question His omnipotence.[1] Again, in a paper which he contributed lately to a book of essays entitled *Ideals of Science*, he owns that science is a long way from actively supporting religion. In spite of this, no name is, or used to be, more frequently quoted than his, in support of the Church's contention that a reconciliation has taken place.

The admissions of Sir Oliver Lodge are, in a certain sense, all the more important because he certainly is one of the few men of science who still retain a strong belief in a spiritual world. In the *Hibbert Journal* for January, 1905, he informs us that he is

[1] See *Nature*, April 23rd, 1903.

opposed to a materialistic monism, such as Haeckel's, and that "the progress of thought has left him (Haeckel), as well as his great English exemplar, Herbert Spencer, somewhat high and dry, belated and stranded by the tide of opinion which has now begun to flow in another direction."[1] This is the sort of statement which is eagerly seized upon by the Church; but it neither witnesses to the truth of Christianity, nor does it voice the opinion of the scientific world. It is the opinion of a scientist who believes that he has had "communication with spirits."[2] Professor Ray Lankester, one of our leading biologists in England, indignantly refutes Sir Oliver's strictures on Professor Haeckel.[3]

Now, it is, of course, quite true that there are schools of thought opposed to Haeckel's. There is, for instance, the school which considers that science has no business to concern herself with theology; and there are the metaphysicians. But the point I wish to make clear is that all of these schools are heterodox. They do not accept the Christian dogmas. It is so easy for false impressions on such matters to get about, and, I regret to add, this does not occur altogether by chance. When Haeckel, one of our greatest living biologists, was caught tripping in his knowledge of theology by a professor of that subject,

[1] This assertion is severely criticised by Mr. Joseph McCabe in the *Hibbert* for July, 1905. Mr. McCabe holds that "Sir Oliver Lodge's own conception of life may, with a far greater show of reason, be described as a modified survival of an older doctrine" (p. 746).

[2] Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the distinguished naturalist and evolutionist, is another scientist with spiritist convictions, and his concern for supernatural religion led him to step outside his own domain and make that remarkable attack upon current scientific opinions in astronomical matters which met with such unanimous condemnation (see the *Fortnightly Review* for March and September, 1903).

[3] In the *Times*, October, 1904.

the Church explained to the laity that the great Dr. Loofs had shown that Haeckel had forfeited his claim to consideration as a reliable man of science; and, on this basis, his *Riddle of the Universe* was held up to obloquy and derision. The Church, however, did not mention at the same time that Haeckel had expressly said that he was not skilled in theology, and that it was only in his own branch of knowledge that he spoke with authority. Nor did the Church mention that their champion, the learned theologian, Dr. Loofs, himself discredits the notion of the Virgin-birth, and that the chief bone of contention between the two professors was simply the question of the parentage of Jesus.

It is just because science and religion *are* in conflict that the religious naturally wish to discredit science. They will, if they are sufficiently ignorant, go so far as Lady Blount,[1] and hold that the earth is flat and without motion. But such persons should note that in the Church itself there are a few—the few best qualified to form an opinion—who accept all the main facts of science, and do not think, or pretend that they think, that there has been any reconciliation. The Rev. P. M. Waggett is one of these. He is an apologist of unusual scientific competence, and his new handbook for the clergy, *Religion and Science*, simply bristles with problems which he confesses have yet to be solved. However, he does not allow himself to be disturbed. Conclusions adverse to theology are to be resisted. In other words, we must possess our souls in patience until we can see a way out of our difficulties. He remarks: "There are conclusions which

[1] At Exeter Hall, in March, 1905, Lady Blount developed her "flat-earth" theory, and accused Newton of want of logic.

are to be dissolved, and conclusions which are to be avoided; but there are also conclusions which have to be resisted, held at bay—'held up,' I think some adventurous Western people call it—until we can see our way to destroy them. Such a resistance is not irrational." He personally prefers "the positive or scientific treatment and pursuit of religion," and he goes on to say that "this positive pursuit of the facts of the spirit must be maintained in spite of difficulties. It must be maintained in spite of outstanding discrepancies with science." To my mind, the position here taken up by Mr. Waggett is the only possible one for a convinced Christian who has a real knowledge of science. He avoids the snares into which so many of his fellow clerics have fallen. For he does not jump at the conclusion that every "gap" in our knowledge of life's mysteries is a proof of the supernatural. Nor does he attempt to show, as many other apologists are wont to do, that there is no direct connection between science and religion. He does not try to escape the criticism of metaphysical conclusions which a scientific habit of thought engenders. But, while his position may appear at first sight a tenable one, whether it be so or not depends entirely upon the correctness of the assumption on which his argument is really based—the true witness of the heart, as against the false witness of the reason. It is interesting to compare Mr. Waggett's position with that of another of the progressives. The Rev. John Kelman writes in *Ideals of Science and Faith*:[1] "So

[1] A book, edited by the Rev. J. E. Hand (George Allen), which gives, perhaps, the best that can be said by able and fair-minded men, writing in the light of the latest knowledge and criticism, in favour of a reconciliation between religion and science. The book

far as we have gone, the history of the past, viewed by the light in which the newer conceptions of the Bible have placed it, shows that, at the present moment in the progress of thought, science and religion are not in the least degree at strife. They need no reconciliation." Suppose the Rev. J. Kelman to be right and the Rev. P. M. Waggett to be wrong, what then? It is the *newer* conceptions of the Bible which make it possible for Mr. Kelman to speak of a reconciliation—the very conceptions which the orthodox cannot and will not accept. The orthodox believer is told that religion and science are reconciled; but he is not told by what means. Thus the orthodox, who would never think of accepting the "terribly heterodox" ideas of the advanced school, are all the time accepting a result which could only be arrived at by the help of those self-same ideas. In fact, it was the very necessity for a reconciliation which originated their invention.

So much is said about "scientific doubt" in these days that it is well to remember that doubts as to the truth of the Christian belief are not caused alone by purely scientific difficulties of faith. Carlyle refused to accept Darwin's theories. His temperament was strongly inclined to a stern Puritanical piety, and his whole nature was antipathetic to science. Yet he did not think it possible that "educated honest men could profess much longer to believe in historical Christianity." Renan, a profound scholar in Oriental languages, shows, in his famous work, *The Life of Jesus*, that, while keenly appreciative of all that

contains essays by various authors—Sir O. Lodge, Professors Thomson, Geddes, and Muirhead, the Rev. P. M. Waggett, the Rev. John Kelman, and others.

was beautiful in the life and teaching of Jesus, he was forced, by his study of the Scriptures[1] in the original, to the conclusion that the miraculous part of the narrative had no historical foundation. Leo Tolstoi, the helper of the helpless, whose voice is ever raised in the cause of universal love and peace, vainly sought an answer to religious doubts, and finally renounced Christian dogmas, building up a religion of his own. Numerous instances could be given showing that well-known and pious-minded thinkers have rejected Christianity on grounds other than scientific. And this diversity in the reasons for negation further tends to strengthen those suspicions regarding our faith which it is now the apologist's task to dispel.

A significant circumstance is the far more tolerant attitude of the better-informed clergy towards the unbeliever. There still remain persons of the Dr. Torrey and the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon[2] type, ready to vilify the agnostic; but their number is rapidly on the decrease. The clergy, as a whole, are more tolerant now than many of the pious laity. Why is this? Is it not because they are beginning to appreciate the perplexities of faith, and to learn that agnostics as a body can be, and are, good men? Under certain conditions they themselves have severe wrestlings with the dictates of reason, and it is only by prayer[3] and occupying their minds in their work

[1] Dr. W. Barry, in his *Ernest Renan*, is content to attribute the change mainly to Renan's study of Kant. But such a theory is inconsistent with Renan's own statement in his *Reminiscences*, where he expressly declares that questions of history, not metaphysics, shook his faith.

[2] Author of a vituperative libel on agnostics, called *Atheism and Faith*.

[3] The psychical aspect of the belief of such persons is discussed in Chap. VI., § 5.

that they are able to dispel dark doubts. They will tell you that a faith such as theirs, and such as they hope you will attain after emergence from doubt, is a real faith, with which the faith of the ordinary person, accepting everything on trust, is not to be compared.

It is all very well to talk glibly, as so many do nowadays, of an age of tolerance. How can *man* be tolerant in matters concerning which *God* is alleged to have distinctly told us that he is not tolerant? It has often occurred to me that, were there such a person as the Devil, he must be much puzzled over the case of the high-minded agnostic, and more especially so if the latter conceived it his duty to propagate his views. In other words, if he were a militant agnostic—a Huxley. For, on the one hand, if the Devil could persuade the agnostic to adopt religious conformity at the expense of self-respect, he would ruin the agnostic's character, and so drag one more soul into perdition; but he would at the same time be rendering the whole Christian community a service by saving them from the dangerous advice of the agnostic. On the other hand, if Satan aided the agnostic in the line of conduct which he was at present conscientiously pursuing, the soul of the latter would slip from Satan's grasp (for I presume there can be no punishment for honesty); but, as Anti-Christ, Satan would reap a grand harvest from the seeds of unbelief sown by the agnostic. And the purer and more unselfish the life of the agnostic, the more the latter would influence people to share his opinions. How does God view this perplexing situation? We are told from the pulpit nowadays by the broader-minded parson, not only that agnostics may be good men, but that they "exhibit the very temper which

Christ blesses."[1] This curious truce between Believer and Unbeliever, each still holding fast to his belief or unbelief, only serves to demonstrate with added force that there is not, and cannot be, a reconciliation between Faith and Knowledge.

§ 4. *The Genesis and Character of the New Outburst.*

It is imperative that the Churches should appreciate the real character of the new outburst of scepticism. The controversy with rationalism has entered upon

[1] Canon Scott Holland, in a sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on the first Sunday after Epiphany, 1905. His precise words were: "It is no petulant boy making his petulant repudiation, but a man with steady and deliberate judgment, weighing, examining, testing, and still, at last to his own sorrow, to his own confessed cost, bravely facing what he deems to be the fact, and pronouncing, 'I am not of the Body; I cannot share the life of the Christian community.' And yet, if we look at him, we recognise in every detail of his character the lines that lead to Christ. He illustrates and exhibits the very temper which Christ blesses; he is pure, unselfish, humble, and good..... He may say what he pleases, but Christ has not forsworn him." Subsequently he acknowledges in moving terms that, *as the populations are emerging from out of their darkness, so they are repudiating the name of Christ.* But he gives no explanation for a circumstance so perplexing for a Christian. Let me not be misunderstood to say that this extremely lenient view towards the agnostic is the usual one at present. On the contrary, the Bishop of Moray voices the opinion of the majority of the orthodox when he challenges the wisdom of this sympathetic attitude in the following words (spoken at the Diocesan Synod held in Inverness Cathedral in the autumn of 1904). "When," he says, "the two foundations of our Christian faith—the Virgin-birth of our Blessed Lord and his Resurrection from the dead—are openly denied, or explained in some transcendental sense which involves the denial of their historical reality, both declared unequivocally in the two earlier creeds; when it is even said by one who writes on the orthodox side that, without these, Christianity so mutilated is an austere and difficult religion, but not an ignoble one, and those who are trying to guide their lives by its light are deserving of sympathy rather than harsh condemnation.....when, I say, teaching such as this is becoming more and more common among us ....is this a time to banish into silence, or relegate to an inferior position, one of the great bulwarks of the Faith—the Athanasian Creed?"

another phase—a phase far more dangerous to the security of Christendom. As was inevitable, the suspicions regarding the faith have filtered down to classes that are not content to be duped because, forsooth, it is said to be for their good. They have none of the reasons of the upper-class agnostic for "lying low." The enlightenment of the working man has been accelerated during the past year or so by the issue of cheap reprints from the books of our great scientists and thinkers, and by a direct attack upon religion by the well-known editor of the *Clarion*, Robert Blatchford. That the Churches are already partly alive to the new danger is evinced by their present anxious attitude towards the spread of knowledge likely to be damaging to the Faith. It was one of the subjects discussed at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference in June, 1904, and will, doubtless, be earnestly discussed at the next Church Congress, together with the whole question of the rapid increase in unbelief. While, however, the Church inveighs against the "reprints," they give out, also, that "Christianity is always strengthened by being attacked." This is hardly consistent. For why not, then, allow the process of strengthening to continue by these means? Certainly, *if* Christianity be true, the Church ought to be strengthened. How could it be otherwise? It might compel her to discard some of her dogmas; but that would only be if they were false, and, in such case, she is better without them. Nothing but good should arise from a thorough examination of her tenets. She would be enabled to find out where her weakness lies, and thus to emerge from the ordeal stronger than ever.

Those who wish, as I do, to learn the whole truth

concerning Christianity, hope that she will no longer postpone a complete and unbiassed investigation of the whole of the anti-Christian arguments. Doubtless we shall get our wish in time; but meanwhile we deplore the delay, for reasons I have more particularly set forth in the concluding chapter of this book. If the honest truth be that she is not confident of the security of her position, are we to understand that the cause of Untruth is thought to be more likely to prosper than the cause of Truth?

Of the two conflicting views regarding the effect of anti-Christian attacks—the pessimistic and the optimistic—it is the former which appears to me the more likely to be correct. For consider what would occur should attacks of far greater severity be delivered—a contingency by no means impossible in the near future. Suppose the "rational" propagandists, instead of being hampered by the want of funds and influential support, were to become endowed with a fraction of the wealth of the Church, and were thus in a position to popularise their views by spending money in extensive advertisement of every description, subsidising platform orators who would propound rationalism and non-theological ethics in every town and village, relieving distress, and so on, would the Christian Faith be strengthened? Has it not already suffered since the sixpenny reprints began to bring knowledge within the reach of the people—the people who have, many of them, little or nothing to fear from an expression of their agnosticism? If militant rationalists were sufficiently possessed of this world's goods to start an adequate fund for the lucrative employment of clergymen who find they can no longer subscribe to the articles of the Christian Faith, and who would

leave the Church if they could do so without having to face absolute ruin, would not the secessions increase in direct proportion to the increase of the fund and the consequent means of support?[1] If those men of note who are even now agnostics at heart were to proclaim the fact and assist in propagandism,[2] would not the flock follow the bell-wethers?

But now, bell-wethers or no bell-wethers, the same result is gradually being brought about by a process which, if slow, is none the less sure. The questioners of the Faith are no longer merely philosophers, scientists, and others who join hands with a section of our divines in prescribing a dietary of fairy tales for the preservation of the moral health of the masses. Whether hastened or not by the action of the propagandist, the masses, in these days of universal education, are bound to hear sooner or later of these grave doubts. Many of the working class[3] are far more thoughtful and intelligent regarding questions of science as it affects religion than is generally supposed.[4] Hitherto they have been under two very

[1] The Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association is constantly receiving private letters from clergymen expressing their desire to leave the Church if they could find some employment. They usually have large families dependent upon them for support.

[2] The reason they do not assist I have already explained earlier in this chapter. Whether those reasons will hold good for all time remains to be seen.

[3] I omit all mention of the trading or domestic classes who may depend directly for their support on strict religionists. The way in which "their bread is buttered" is bound to enter considerably into their calculations, and also they have often even less leisure for the study of modern thought than a steady (temperate) working man.

[4] At the meeting of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches on March 9th, 1905, Dr. Horton, the new president, describes the working man in felicitous terms when he says: "Men who work with their hands have strong intellects, though not of a speculative order. They have practical intellects. They are not particularly interested in philosophy and poetry. It might as well not

considerable disadvantages—the costliness of the books and the want of leisure to read them. The leisure disability still holds good, though less so now that temperance is on the increase; but the books are to-day offered at popular prices, and are also finding their way into public libraries. The Church can, perhaps, depend for some time to come upon the non-interference and even active support of the upper classes, however sceptical they may be; but it is the proletariat which she will in future have to deal with more and more. She is in a dilemma; her hand is forced. She realises that discussion will cause the unsettlement of minds hitherto unclouded by doubt, and yet matters have reached a stage when silence is impossible. It is doubtful whether she has yet fully realised the gravity of the task before her. I have explained how she seems to have been deceived as to the real meaning of the apparent suspension of hostilities during the past few years. She has also to learn how impossible it will be for the ordinary mind to accept the unconvincing and contradictory expositions of the Faith which are now offered to us under the title of Christian apologetics.

§ 5. *Apologetics "Found Wanting."*

The time, then, has arrived when the pastor can no longer ignore or gloze over the thoughts that are stirring the minds of the intelligent portion of his flock. The cheap literature problem cannot be solved by applying disparaging adjectives, such as "shallow," to writings emanating from the pens of Darwin,

exist for them. English working men hardly know the names of the English poets; but for practical intelligence and the handling of facts the English working men are the greatest people in the world."

Huxley, Tyndall, S. Laing, Matthew Arnold, Sir Leslie Stephen, Renan, Haeckel,[1] etc., easy though it be to excite prejudice by the use of a condemnatory adjective. Books that are still costly will some day be available at popular prices, and increase the perplexities of the people. I refer to books of the type of Lecky's *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Doane's *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology* and *Pagan Christs*, Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* (Vol. I., Part I., giving the Data of Sociology), Metchnikoff's *The Nature of Man*, Haeckel's *The Evolution of Man*, etc. Will not the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, with a title so innocent, and with an editor and many of its contributors in Holy Orders, soon find its way into our public libraries and be a thorn in the side of the orthodox? Think how a book such as Nunquam's (Robert Blatchford) *God and My Neighbour* must already have been read by and have affected the convictions of thousands of the working class. And the grave doubts of a hard-headed artisan are not in the least likely to be dispelled by *Anti-Nunquam*,[2] or any

[1] *The Riddle of the Universe* was described as a "book of rubbish" by Father Gerard, a member of the "Society of Jesus." He has not the least authority for such an indictment. On the contrary, every single biologist would tell him that he was himself talking rubbish. The Turin Academy crowned it as the best book written in the last four years of the nineteenth century. Clergymen seem to prefer to get their science from apologetic works only. How many, I wonder, have ever read the masterly exposition of the case for Haeckel—*Haeckel's Critics Answered*, by Joseph McCabe?

[2] *Anti-Nunquam*, by Dr. Warschauer, with prefatory note by J. Estlin Carpenter, is considered by many Churchmen to be an admirable refutation of *God and My Neighbour*. I have seldom read anything less likely to convince. Sentence after sentence is open to the gravest exception.

of the literature so far published as a panacea "in relief of doubt."[1] Indeed, some apologetic works are enough in themselves to create mistrust, though the reader had not read a single anti-Christian work! The extraordinary divergence in the views of the authors, to say nothing of the transparency of some of their arguments, prevents all chance of apologetics convincing any but those already determined to be convinced. The writer in one stage of thought absolutely contradicts a writer in another stage. Compare Goulburn and Pusey in their awful assertions of everlasting punishment with Allin's *Universalism Asserted* and *Larger Hope* leaflets, or the views of a Wace regarding Evolution with the views of a Waggett. If we confine ourselves to making comparisons only between the advanced thinkers themselves, compare the opinions of the Bishop of Birmingham (late of Worcester) with those of Canons Henson and Cheyne. The deplorable state of religious apologetics is becoming notorious, and articles bearing on the subject are now appearing from time to time in our leading magazines.[2]

In defending the Faith the advanced school of the

[1] A work entitled *In Relief of Doubt*, by the Rev. R. E. Welsh, a Presbyterian minister, is an attempt by an exceedingly earnest man to remove doubts concerning the Bible. There is an introductory note by the Bishop of London. The book is written in what the Bishop terms a "racy" style, and has the merit of much straightforwardness; but few well-informed, and at the same time open-minded, readers would agree with the conclusions of the author. The argument that St. Paul was a contemporary of Christ is one of the principal features; but see Chap. II., § 3, and Chap. III., § 2.

[2] *E.g.*, in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, see the article on "The Present Position of Religious Apologetics," appearing in the issue for October, 1903; or on "Freethought in the Church of England" in the issues for September and December, 1904. The answers in the same journal are most unsatisfactory, and only serve to show how very little, apparently, can be said in reply.

Church now frankly admit the difficulties of the old belief, and ask us to accept their new interpretations of Christianity. The older school of theologians, the school who can neither bring themselves to assert the truth of evolution nor to give a decided opinion on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, are unwillingly, very unwillingly, beginning to follow in their wake. The views of the two schools being in conflict on many vital points, it is impossible that they can ever be brought into agreement. Yet, unless concerted measures are soon taken, confusion will be worse confounded. To add to the perplexity of the situation, there are also the various views of the Nonconformists to be taken into account. Then there are the Scottish Churches, having on the one side the law-supported minority, standing for an infallible Bible and all the doctrines of John Calvin; and, on the other, the majority standing for a form of Christianity which is really Calvinism with a somewhat unequally-applied veneer of Higher Criticism. Finally there is the Irish Church[1] still sunk in the gross superstitions of the Dark Ages.

The advanced school represent the section which is in close touch with modern thought, so that their new interpretations of the Faith constitute the one and only hope of arresting the advance of agnosticism. On the other hand, the justice of the objections to these new interpretations is borne out by the circumstance that many of the older school would

[1] In *Priests and People in Ireland*, by Michael McCarthy, there is a complete exposé of the methods and results of Christian teaching in this portion of the British Isles, and a portrait of a typical Roman Catholic priest which demonstrates his elevating (?) influence. Also see *Twelve Years in a Monastery* and *Life in a Modern Monastery*, by Joseph McCabe.

no more think of accepting them than they would of giving up their belief; rather than accept them they prefer to deny the facts of science. Both sides do violence to their reason—the enlightened in using the subtleties of their intellect for interpretations which appear transparently false alike to the orthodox and to the unbeliever; the obscurantist in denying established facts. Consider for a moment what all this means. It means that the modern sceptic has the support of the strictly orthodox when he refutes the only explanations as yet offered to dispel his doubts. It means that the validity of the agnostic's objections to these new-fangled interpretations is fully borne out by the common sense of Christians themselves, and that a denial of the facts of science and of the results of Biblical research is the only way we can escape from unbelief. If a puzzled truth-seeker tried to take a middle course, he would have to believe that black and white were the same colour, and his belief would degenerate into an exceedingly unedifying grey. There is a large proportion of this "grey" belief just now.

I cannot too strongly reiterate that this complete divergence in the interpretation of a revelation alleged to have been vouchsafed by God cannot but give rise to the most intense suspicion. The very word "apologetics" is self-condemnatory. How is it that the claims of Christianity require all this vindication? Heresies and schisms and the need for apologetics form the constant note of Christian history from first to last. True there was a lull in the questionings of the Faith; but that was during the Dark Ages, when the priests adopted the policy of keeping the world in ignorance, and of destroying all the evidences

against Christianity that they could lay their hands upon. If the events, said to have happened, really happened, and if God wished the world to know of them, why all this mystery, why the need for all these apologetics concerning them? Which of the conflicting explanations are we to take as correct?

The late Bishop of Durham, Dr. Westcott, in a passage in his book, *Lessons from Work*, says: "It would be easier if we might divest ourselves of the divine prerogative of reason. It would be easier, but would that be the life which Christ came down from heaven to show us and place within our reach?" It is not for me to quarrel with such an emphatic pronouncement in favour of using our reason; but such advice cannot be reconciled with the teaching of Christ or of our own Church—that we should receive God's word as "babes." Remember those strange words attributed to Him: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes." From this one would gather that it was God's pleasure to hide Himself from the wise, and therefore that the increase of agnosticism alongside the spread of knowledge was all part of the Divine plan. The Roman Catholic Church is more consistent. She obeys the alleged teaching of Christ in this respect to the letter.[1] The truth is that when

[1] "The Papal Church, founded, to a large extent, on superstition and ignorance, has ever been afraid of knowledge, of study, and education; hence she only consulted her own life's interests when, in the Middle Ages, she decreed knowledge to be identical with heresy, and heresy to be punishable by death." These words are quoted from *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, by the Rev. Alexander Robertson, D.D., a book accorded a flattering reception by the King of Italy in 1903. Again, Lord Macaulay, speaking of the Roman Catholic Church in the first chapter of his *History of England*, says

Jesus spoke these words, if He ever did speak them, the vast majority of mankind were "babes." His disciples were "babes"; His enemies the more enlightened. He did not foresee the advance of knowledge and the spread of education. Nor did the Church anticipate this increase in "wisdom," or rather, I should say, she employed every possible means to hinder it. If God's revelation may be understood by babes, it must be very simple. How, then, do we find it requiring all this explanation—explanation which no ordinary adult can understand? Who could call modern theology simple? Can we say that of our philosopher-Premier's books, *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* and *The Foundations of Belief*?[1] Is it not because the Church recognises that the masses will never understand all these subtle explanations and pleas for a re-statement of Christianity that she is in no hurry to impart the new ideas from the pulpit?[2] Even the more intellectual truthseeker is constantly recommended to trust less to his reason, and "to come to Christ as a little child."

The objections of the more conservative to the new interpretations of Christianity are well expressed in the solemn words of a former Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, himself inveighed against, in his day, as somewhat of a freethinker. "Many," writes Dean

that, "during the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been made in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor."

[1] Those who have read these books should read also *Mr. Balfour's Apologetics Critically Examined.* (Watts & Co.)

[2] In the exceptional cases where it is imparted, it is to "advanced" congregations.

Mansell, "who would shrink with horror from the idea of rejecting Christ altogether, will yet speak and act as if they were at liberty to set up for themselves an eclectic Christianity, separating the essential from the superfluous portions of Christ's teaching, deciding for themselves how much is permanent and necessary for all men, and how much is temporary and designed only for a particular age and people. Yet if Christ is indeed God manifest in the Flesh, it is surely not less impious to attempt to improve His teaching than to reject it altogether. Nay, in one respect it is more so, for it is to acknowledge a doctrine as the revelation of God, and, at the same time, to proclaim that it is inferior to the wisdom of man."

The Athanasian Creed controversy furnishes some striking examples of both conservative and latitudinarian opinions. Dr. Pusey is related to have said: "If the Athanasian Creed is touched, I see nothing to do but to give up my canonry." Yet we find the present Primate replying to a deputation of clergymen who desired to be relieved from the obligation of reciting this Creed: "I am in complete sympathy with the object you have at heart." Presumably he is in agreement with Dr. Barnes, Hulsean professor of divinity, who, when lecturing lately at Cambridge on the Athanasian Creed, declared that there was "no authority in Scripture for its minatory clauses." The well-meant attempt of the Dean of Westminster to smooth down the asperities of the Creed by *singing* instead of saying it, is typical of those pitiful attempts to tide over difficulties which are now so much in evidence. "We make," says one of the old school, "unsuitable persons partakers of the Divine service of the Church, and then it is proposed to alter the

Divine service to suit them. Let honest Unbelievers or Half-Believers absent themselves from the Assembly of the Faithful, and let the Faithful worship faithfully." Yet, if this line of conduct were put into practice, if the modern "Origens" were anathematised, and those laymen only admitted to Divine service who held all the articles of the Christian faith, without mental reservations of any kind, every single advanced theologian would be degraded from his office, and the present twenty-two per cent. who are church and chapel-goers would be reduced to—what shall we say? Well, the Churches having cultured congregations would be almost empty. The modern spirit of toleration, admirable as it is in many ways, assists in preventing the discovery of the real truth of the matter. The Church is grossly deceiving herself if she really thinks that the apparent adherence of the majority of the well-to-do classes indicates that burning suspicions of the Christian dogmas have been quenched by Christian apologetics.

§ 6. *More Things which Confuse the Issue.*

In the early part of this chapter I have alluded to the real causes for the apparent acquiescence of the majority in the claims of the Christian religion. Among these causes there is a somewhat complex one requiring special notice, for it tends to confuse the main issue, more perhaps than any other. The Church is now appearing in a somewhat novel rôle. Until quite recently her concern was only for the spiritual welfare of man, and she expected to gain her purpose by supernatural rather than by natural means. This plan, after many centuries of trial, has proved a terrible failure. It has not contributed

either to man's spiritual or material improvement. Now, in England, she is emulating the thorough-paced humanitarian in her devotion to the betterment of humanity by natural means. Never before has there been that interest in the material condition of the people which is now evinced by such institutions as the Church Temperance Society and Homes for Inebriates, the Church Army, the Church Lads Brigade, the Church Rescue Societies, etc., and the Salvation Army. The Church, too, is now concerning herself with the better housing of the poor, the improvement of our jail system, and other rational methods for raising the social condition of the people, and for creating an environment likely to improve the moral atmosphere. All such measures, in fact, as have long ago been advocated by rationalists and socialists are now taken up vigorously by the Churches. "Better late than never," you will say. Quite so; but that is not the point. Far be it from me to decry these excellent results of "modern thought"; but the fact remains that the issue is thereby confused, and will continue to be thus confused for some time to come. People will only look at what the Churches, in Protestant countries at least, are now doing, and see in it another proof of Christianity's power for good. They will not trouble their heads to consider why it should have taken nearly 2,000 years before the Christian Church recognised her duties towards her poorer neighbours.[1] They will not grasp the true

[1] Thus, in the writings of the most eloquent of English divines, Jeremy Taylor, there is an absence of almost any allusion to the life of the poor. He preaches to the influential and rich friends of his patron. Of the poor he never speaks, and seldom seems to think. The Church is at last alive to the fact that her religious duties are essentially social. The United Parish Organisation is a movement for promoting organised action in this direction.

situation—namely, that it is the rise of rationalism which has forced the Church to deviate from her ancient methods.

Nor is it only this increase of zeal for "raising humanity out of the gutter" which has confused the issue. Numerous are the ways in which Christianity obtains a prestige sometimes partly deserved, sometimes wholly undeserved. Good works belong to the former class. The Churches of all denominations have always occupied the position of grand almoners, and, so far as they have carried out that trust conscientiously, they have fully earned the confidence of the rich and the gratitude of the poor. But people are liable to forget that the huge donations given during their lifetime, and left in their wills by charitably disposed persons, are given usually from true humanitarian principles, and that kind hearts are to be found all over the world, quite apart from belief or unbelief. These gifts to the needy are not, let it be said to the credit of mankind, a mere soul-insurance, like the donations given, and often extorted, in the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, for "Masses," "Indulgences," etc. All this charitable work, for which the Church is the agent employed, is usually put down entirely to the credit of the Church and Christianity. It does not seem to be realised that the "Golden Rule" is far older than Christianity, and is practised in other than Christian countries; and that the Church, in being entrusted very largely with the dispensation of charity, obtains credit for a service for which she is after all well paid, and which any properly selected body of laymen would perform quite as well.

If all the good and none of the bad works performed

in Christendom are to be attributed to the working of the Christian faith, the same argument must hold good of the Hindu or Buddhist faith, when the people are Hindoos or Buddhists. The code of ethics attached to a religion does, of course, make a difference; but it neither proves that the belief is correct nor that it is impossible to have the ethics without the belief. Confucianism is an *agnostic* ethical system which the *educated classes of Japan have adopted for centuries*,[1] and its splendid results are just now much in evidence. Only a few days ago I received a letter from an agnostic supporter of Christianity who said: "Look at the good that Christianity does, look at its endless charitable organisations"; and he asked, "Could the *Clarion* people do anything of this kind?" It never occurred to him, and it never occurs to many of his way of thinking, that the "*Clarion* people" have very slender funds at present; and the charitable work that they do, though proportionately large, is not likely to come to his notice unless he takes the trouble to inquire. The vast majority of English people are professing Christians, and if any charitable work is to be done agnostics give their support to it, although the agents for it are Christians. However, I have not received a brief from the "Clarionettes." My object is to show how the issue becomes confused, and, if my agnostic friend is correct in considering Christianity false and yet indispensable, the future is indeed full of alarms. What will happen, for instance, when the knowledge of this falsehood becomes common property? I am fully aware that my friend voices the

[1] Some say for the past 250 years, some for a much longer period. The authorities differ, apparently, according as they are pro-Buddhists or pro-Confucianists.

opinion of many fairly thoughtful Englishmen; but this is because they are in the habit of hearing every useful advance in civilisation accredited to Christianity: Hospitals, though they existed long before Christianity, and only fell out of use after its introduction; the raised status of women, though it was on the introduction of Christianity that the status was lowered; abolition of slavery, though among the most strenuous advocates for the abolition were such well-known freethinkers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Stuart Mill, and Moncure Conway, while the whole of Tory England shouted its approval when General Lee drew his sword on behalf of the rights of "Old Virginia," and while Gladstone, in his first Newark address, 1832, owned that slavery was justified by the Bible; efforts for superseding the horrors and clumsiness of war, though freethinkers to a man are supporters of the movement, while Bishops from the pulpit offer up prayers for peace and in the same breath expatiate on the ennobling effects of war upon the race, and while the head of a mighty theocratic-autocratic Christian Government calls the nations to a peace conference, and then takes the first opportunity to prosecute the most unnecessary and bloody war the world has ever known.

It is erroneous assertions such as these which tend, perhaps, more than anything else, to confuse the simple question before us—the truth of Christianity. They are therefore discussed at greater length in a separate chapter devoted to popular fallacies. Meanwhile, in the present chapter I hope I have succeeded in giving some insight into the true nature of the present situation.

MIRACLES

Chapter II.

THE EXTRAORDINARY STATE OF APOLOGETICS WITH REGARD TO MIRACLES

§ 1. *Preliminary Remarks.*

In this and the following chapters I hope to show how matters stand with reference to the more important points at issue between the Christian apologist and the Rationalist. The truth or otherwise of the Bible miracles being of supreme importance, I begin with an examination of the position of apologetics with regard to them.

THE VIEW OF SCIENCE.

Professor Huxley once made the following remark: "The miracles of the Church are child's play to the miracles I see in nature." This has been hailed by the apologist as a satisfactory admission that science concedes the possibility of miracles. It is continually being quoted in apologetic works and from the pulpit, and is apparently considered as a conclusive piece of evidence that science has nothing to say against miracles. But, Professor Huxley went on to explain: "On the strength of an undeniable improbability, however, we not only have a right to demand, but are morally bound to require, strong evidence in favour of a miracle before we even take it into serious consideration. But when, instead of such evidence,

nothing is produced but stories originating nobody knows how or when, among persons who could firmly believe in devils which enter pigs, I confess that my feeling is one of astonishment that anyone should expect a reasonable man to take such testimony seriously."[1] We never hear of this from the pulpit! Possibly Professor Huxley would not have been thus misrepresented—or shall we say misunderstood?—if he had spoken of the *wonders* of nature, and had not used a word popularly understood to signify that break in nature's laws which it has yet to be proved has ever occurred, or can ever occur. The wonders of nature take place in accordance with natural laws;[2] miracles do not.

WHY HAVE MIRACLES CEASED?

An obvious objection to miracles is the one often propounded by an inquiring child, "Why do we no longer have miracles?" Paley tries to parry this by saying: "To expect, concerning a miracle, that it should succeed upon repetition is to expect that which would make it cease to be a miracle; which is contrary to its nature as such, and would totally destroy the use and purpose for which it was wrought."[3] But, as Cotter Morison remarks:[4] "Assuming that a miracle reveals the presence of a supernatural power, why should its repetition destroy its miraculous character? Above all, why should it destroy its use? If miracles are intended to convert the stiff-necked and hard-of-heart, what more likely

[1] Essay on "Possibilities and Impossibilities," appearing in the *Agnostic Annual* for 1892.

[2] That there must therefore be a Lawgiver is an argument for theism; but see Chap. VI. and the allusions there to the disharmonies of nature.

[3] Paley's *Evidences—Preparatory Considerations.*

[4] In his book, *The Service of Man.*

way of bringing them to submission than the repetition of miracles? And, according to Scripture, this was precisely the way in which Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was humbled. He resisted the miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron with stubbornness all through the first nine plagues; but the universal slaying of the first-born broke even his spirit..... It may suit Paley to say that repetition of miracles would destroy their use; but he must be a luke-warm theologian who does not at times wish from the depth of his heart that an authentic miracle could be produced. Yet it is at this momentous crisis in the religious affairs of the world, when the enemy is carrying one position after another, and has all but penetrated to the citadel of belief, that no miracles occur, that no miracles are claimed, except, indeed, of the compromising species made at Lourdes.....When no one doubted the possibility of the frequency of miracles they abounded, we are told—that is, when, by reason of their number and the ready credit accorded to them, their effect was the least startling, then they were lavished on a believing world. Now, when they are denied and insulted as the figments of a barbarous age; when the faith they might support is in such jeopardy as it never was before; when a tithe of the wonders wasted in the deserts of Sinai and the 'parts beyond Jordan' would shake the nations with astonishment and surprise—when, in short, the least expenditure of miracle would produce the maximum of result, then miracles mysteriously cease. This fact, which is beyond contest, has borne fruit, and will yet bear more."

Some pious Christians, feeling the force of arguments such as these, contend that Christ's promises

to believers do indeed apply to all time; that supernatural manifestations have not ceased; and that when there is no exercise of the supernatural in the visible Church of Christendom, it is owing to lack of faith. "Can you give me," asks Father Ignatius,[1] "one single text in Holy Scripture to prove that miracles and visions are to cease with the apostles? When we hear, in all directions, of the supernatural being manifested, we need not wonder, for we are living in a day which demands supernatural manifestations more than than any other epoch in the Christian Church."

BELIEF IN MIRACLES ESSENTIAL.

The old argument in support of miracles and inspiration was clearly vitiated by its circular nature, for it was to the effect that miracles were true because asserted to be so in the Bible, which was the inspired word of God, and that the Bible was inspired because the miracles proved it to be so. This argument is gradually being dropped,[2] and I have only alluded to it to show how much importance used to be, and, for the matter of that, still is, attached to miracles, as

[1] In his notable oration upon the apparitions at Llanthony.

[2] The Bishop of London still adheres to the old style of argument. In explaining why he believes in miracles, he assumes that the documents recording them are true and inspired. In his book, *Reasons for Faith* (S. P. C. K.), he delivers himself to the following effect:—"I should invite the inquirer to read carefully the description of a Christian community, and the extraordinary phenomena which habitually took place in it, in 1 Cor. xii. and xiv. St. Paul is not here proving anything. He has no motive for exaggeration. His object is rather to tone down manifestations which were apt to pass the bounds of sobriety. But he does assume throughout that there *were* manifestations, which he takes as a matter of course, though to us they seem extraordinary. These manifestations were very varied of their kind; 'gifts of healing,' 'workings of miracles,' 'prophecy,' 'discerning of spirits,' 'divers kinds of tongues,' 'interpretation of tongues,' are all placed upon the same footing."

proving the truth of the Bible. Butler, Paley, Mansel,[1] Mozley,[2] Farrar,[3] Westcott,[4] Liddon, and a host of other authorities, could not conceive that revelation could be made in any other way than by miracles, and felt that without them Christianity would be proved false and overthrown. Such also appears to be the opinion of the majority of our living dignitaries.[5] On the other hand, the minority, which we may take to be represented by the able writers in *Contentio Veritatis* and elsewhere, maintain that "the time is past when Christianity could be presented as a revelation attested by miracles.....We must accept Christianity, not on the ground of the miracles, but in spite of them.....There has been no special intervention of the Divine Will contrary to the natural order of things." That is, by ruling miracles to be out of court, the new school are able to reconcile the

[1] *E.g.*, Dean Mansel said: "If there be one fact recorded in Scripture which is entitled, in the fullest sense of the word, to the name of a miracle, the Resurrection of Christ is that fact. Here, at least, is an instance in which the entire Christian faith must stand or fall with our belief in the supernatural.....A superhuman authority needs to be substantiated by superhuman evidence, and what is superhuman is miraculous" (pp. 3 and 35 of *Aids to Faith*, 4th ed.).

[2] Dr. Mozley said: "Miracles and the supernatural contents of Christianity must stand or fall together" (Bampton Lectures, 1865).

[3] Dr. Farrar said: "However skilfully the modern ingenuity of semi-belief may have tampered with supernatural interpositions, it is clear to every honest and unsophisticated mind that, if miracles be incredible, Christianity is false" (*The Witness of History to Christ*, Hulsean Lectures for 1870, 2nd ed., 1872, p. 25).

[4] Dr. Westcott said: "The essence of Christianity lies in a miracle, and, if it can be shown that a miracle is either impossible or incredible, all further inquiry into the details of its history is superfluous from a religious point of view" (*The Gospel of the Resurrection*, 3rd ed., 1874, p. 34).

[5] This has been made abundantly clear lately by the unanimous reply of a large number of Bishops to a correspondent of the *Record*, who had written letters to them stating that he had heard that "not a single Bishop on the bench to-day believed in the miraculous in religion" (reported in the daily papers towards the close of January, 1905).

facts of science with the Christian faith. The old school, on the other hand, consider Christianity to be untrue without miracles. "The miraculous element," they say, "cannot be weeded out of the Gospel narratives without altogether impugning the historical value of these documents."[1] They are able to maintain this position, and yet remain believers, by disallowing the facts of science. It is an extraordinary state of affairs, and who can wonder that many of the laity who know of these things are meanwhile fast relapsing into agnosticism? As a matter of fact, no bishop, no clerk in Holy Orders, can honestly retain his preferment unless he believes in miracles. He would have to follow the example of the late Sir Leslie Stephen, and resign.

§ 2. *Miracle Apologetics.*

The question arises, "How, then, do the majority of our spiritual guides regard the accounts of miracles in the Bible?" Broadly speaking, miracles are divided by them into three classes—(1) mythical, but containing spiritual truths; (2) explicable naturally;[2] (3) historical and vital. Should their views be of a very advanced type, all the miracles will be relegated to the first two classes. If advanced, but not quite so much advanced, the fundamental miracles of the

[1] See p. 222 of *Some Elements of Religion*, Liddon.

[2] Formerly, as already pointed out, no reconciliation was accepted which sacrificed the miraculous element. Thus Archbishop Trench affirmed that a miracle was "no miracle if it lay in nature already; if it was only the evoking of forces latent therein; if the mysterious processes and powers by which those works were brought about had been only undiscovered hitherto, and not undiscoverable by the efforts of human inquiry" (p. 75 of *Notes on Miracles*). Cardinal Newman also says distinctly: "The miracles of Scripture are undeniably beyond nature" (p. 116 of *Two Essays on Scripture Miracles*).

Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension will be taken into the third class. Continuing to descend the scale of enlightenment, more and more miracles will find their way into the third class, until no miracles alleged to have been performed by Christ Himself will be discredited—except, perhaps, those that appear particularly incredible or useless, such as sending devils into swine, turning water into wine, or withering a fig tree. Regarding the miracles alleged to have been performed by the Apostles we hear very little. Concerning the Old Testament miracles, however, opinions are freely expressed, and range between those of the Broad Church, who consider the miracles all belong to the first two classes, and those of the strictly orthodox, who maintain all the miraculous events to be facts, on the principle that, whether the whale swallowed Jonah or Jonah swallowed the whale, they must be true because they are related in the Holy Scriptures—the Scriptures that were accepted as historical by their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. People who are the children of Christian parents have been brought up from childhood to a literal acceptance of the miracles, and now they are not only asked to give up the convictions so sedulously implanted while their minds were most receptive, but to choose between the conflicting views of the expounders of God's word.

Let us consider some examples of the latest interpretations, and see if they appeal to our hearts and minds. St. John v. 2–4 is commented on as follows: "While the ancient, knowing little of natural causes, attributed the healing virtue of the Pool to an angel, the modern would speak of the Pool as a medicinal spring." The explanation is sensible enough; but, while incidentally showing that the Evangelists were

just as credulous and ignorant as other people of their times, it is a dangerous concession. For directly a natural explanation of this kind is allowed in one case, it must also be allowed as possible in another, and thus the fundamental miracles might be shorn of all that renders them of any value for substantiating our faith. The healing miracles performed by Jesus are now frequently attributed to the use of the same power as that by which faith-cures are effected at the present time—a power upon which the science of psychology is shedding a new light, and which mental therapeutics will one day place at the disposal of the human race. Apart from this disappointing alteration in the character of the "mighty works" which were supposed to betoken the divinity of Christ, is there not something abhorrent in the thought that *He should take advantage of a secret knowledge of the powers of nature, in order to impose upon the credulity of the age in which He lived, and thus secure the worship of His disciples?* At least, if we are Christians, let us assume that Christ, as man, *believed* He was using supernatural powers, just as He undoubtedly *believed*, according to such an eminent authority as Dr. Sanday, that He really was casting out devils when He cured "the epileptic," etc. It is certainly difficult to understand this "ignorance of Christ";[1] but when apologists attempt to extricate Christian dogmas from the quagmire of doubt by such methods, they only succeed in causing them to disappear into it beyond all hope of recovery. As I have alluded to the subject of Christ's belief in "devil-possession," I should mention here that there are still many cultured ecclesiastics, especially among those who still believe that there is such

[1] Commented upon at length in Chap. III., § 5.

a personage as the Devil, who argue that there was such a malady as devil-possession in those days. Some even hold that it still exists; although, in the case in which the Gadarene swine play so important a part, they are prepared to accept any theory that will explain the devils away. In Jerusalem, at the present time, there are three communities of English-speaking Protestant missionaries whose concern is the exorcism of spirits.[1]

Opinions differ widely as to whether certain miracles actually occurred, or whether they admit of a natural explanation. Take the miracle of "the Feeding of the Five Thousand."[2] The school, of which the Bishop of Birmingham, late of Worcester, and the learned Dr. Sanday are the mouthpieces, consider that, "whatever may have actually occurred, a nineteenth-century observer would have given, if he had been present, a different account from that which has come down to us." On the other hand, the Bishop of London believes this miracle to have occurred "because of the very humble, unimaginative [?], and truthful men who reported it."[3] Could any two views be more diametrically opposite?

[1] Mentioned in the *Occult Review*, September, 1905, p. 144.

[2] Bishop Ingram attaches the utmost importance to the truth of this miracle. In a sermon published in the *Church Times* of October 7th, 1904, he is reported to have said: "It is the worst policy of defence to throw over the miracle of feeding the 5,000, or our Lord's power over disease and death, and then expect to keep the faith of the world in His Incarnation, His Virgin-Birth, and His Resurrection. It was one thing to look carefully into accounts, such as the standing still of the sun over Gibeon in the Old Testament, or possibly the stampede of the swine in the New Testament, and see if they had been misunderstood in the past; but it was quite another thing to minimise or explain away a story such as the feeding of the 5,000, told us again and again as miraculous, which, if not miraculous, is simply untrue, and the only objection to which is that it is something which we do not see happening before our eyes to-day."

[3] Extract from a sermon preached in St. Paul's, Finsbury, on

Obviously, as has already been pointed out, destructive admissions concerning any one of the miracles tend to invalidate the truth of all the rest; and, therefore, we find that apologists of a less advanced stamp are still inclined to the view that the miracles connected with the life of Christ are miracles pure and simple. Godet, in his *Defence of the Christian Faith*, explains that "It will become easy to understand why the prodigies which signalised the advent of Jesus Christ upon earth do not occur in our day..... The appearance of the perfectly Holy Man was so trenchant a break in the life of humanity up to that moment that from the shock it produced there resulted consequences which have not repeated themselves at any other period.....One condition was requisite—viz., that there should exist a Man fit to be associated with the exercise of the Creative Omnipotence." Many doubters may be prepared to admit the necessity of miracles as explained by the learned professor; but they contend that, up to the present time, there is no instance of a miracle having been *proved*, not even the alleged sinlessness[1] of Jesus Christ, and they ask why, if God graciously furnished proofs to one generation, He did not, in His infinite wisdom, ordain that these proofs should be established for all time, beyond all possibility of cavil?

November 23rd, 1904. Just lately the credulity of the honest peasant in our own up-to-date England has been before the public. It was reported (January, 1905) how there was a widespread opinion among the rustics of Binbrook, Lincolnshire, that a certain farm in the neighbourhood was bewitched. All sorts of wild tales—a servant girl burned when nowhere near the fire, chairs hopping unassisted about the rooms, plates and dishes having an inconsiderate habit of jumping off their appointed shelves, and many other tales equally absurd—were thoroughly believed by the narrators. What must not have been the unbounded credulity of the Palestine peasants 2,000 years ago, when even the learned knew nothing of the inexorable laws of nature!

[1] This assertion is examined in Chap. III., § 5.

Passing on to the miracles of the Old Testament, we often find that those who still maintain that only the first chapters of the Bible are legendary will adopt a variation of the second class of interpretation—they will say that the events were of an ordinary character, but occurred in answer to prayer. Joshua is for them an historical character. However, Joshua x. 12–14 must not be taken literally; but allowance should be made for poetical licence. Joshua, it is explained, never really committed himself to the extent of commanding the sun and the moon to stand still, but only "besought God that the black clouds of the storm driving up the pass from the sea might not be allowed to blot out the sun and bring night prematurely before his victory was complete."[1] This prayer, be it remembered, was for the sake of a work of butchery which God was supposed to have sanctioned! Besides, as the sun is said to have obeyed Joshua, and, further, it is said that "there was no day like that before it or after it," at least we are to infer that something very unusual happened. And if this occurred at Joshua's request, then, after all, there *was* a miracle. Similarly the north-east wind theory for explaining the "crossing of the Red Sea" is a possible explanation of what might have happened, if the crossing ever took place; but the fact that Moses (a mythical personage, according to the critics), with the help of his rod, is related to have been the immediate cause, still requires to be explained.

Perhaps the most unsatisfactory explanation of all is that regarding the rainbow. It is agreed, there being

[1] This explanation has been given by the Rev. Samuel Cox, and it is quoted with approval by the Bishop of London on p. 68 of his little work, *Old Testament Difficulties* (S.P.C.K.).

no other alternative, that "it is not meant that the rainbow appeared for the first time to Noah [another purely legendary character] after the Flood [although this is certainly what the Bible leads one to suppose], but that it was adopted then as a visible sign of God's covenant, as water is adopted for a somewhat similar covenant in the New Testament."[1] It is now known for a fact that, if there are any historical data for the story, the Flood could only have been local; but let that pass. Has the rainbow-covenant prevented millions of people perishing since then in many a mighty flood? Looking at God's promise as a token of His pity for suffering humanity, are not deaths occurring every moment, accompanied by agony so prolonged and supreme that, compared with them, a death by drowning would be a happy release? If Jews and Christians still really believe in this story, how is it that the rainbow attracts not the slightest devout attention? I have never yet heard this beautiful spectacle alluded to with any particular reverence. The reason is obvious. We know that the bow consists of all the prismatic colours produced in the atmosphere by the refraction and reflection of the sun's light from the rain drops, and no one regards the Bible story seriously. Yet our divines try to save the credit of the Bible by interpretations which are obviously "catching at straws." Such methods are as harmful as they are pitiful.

In all these examples the explanations offered to us seem to come to this—the phenomena were purely natural from start to finish, only they occurred opportunely and were afterwards poetically embellished; or they contain a spiritual meaning. Perhaps the

[1] See p. 41 of *Old Testament Difficulties*.

most extraordinary argument ever brought forward concerning the "sun standing still" is that urged by the learned Bishop Westcott in his *Gospel of the Resurrection*. He says (pp. 38–9): "It would be positively immoral for us now to pray that the tides or the sun should not rise on a particular day; but, as long as the idea of the physical law which ruled them was unformed or indistinct, the prayer would have been reasonable, and (may we not suppose?) the fulfilment also." It is difficult to believe that these can really be the words of one of the Church's greatest scholars. To what extent will not bias influence the brain to use its powers perversely? It is far-fetched arguments of this kind that increase rather than dispel doubt in the normal mind, and especially when they are brought forward in all seriousness by the very pillars of the Church. We are sometimes asked to banish our doubts and "craving for intellectualism," as it is called, and "to come to Christ as little children, and in Him to find rest." Certainly it is only by letting our minds sink to the level of a little child's, or, what is the same thing, to the level of primeval man's, that we could bring ourselves to accept such childish nonsense. A child asks for the moon, but does not know the physical impossibility of obtaining his desire. His prayer is therefore reasonable, and (may we not suppose?) the fulfilment also. This unconscious trifling with the truth—for in reality it is nothing else—reminds me of a passage in Dr. Smith's orthodox, but somewhat out of date, *Dictionary of the Bible*, where an attempt is made to reconcile the Mosaic narrative of Creation with the discoveries of modern science. It runs as follows: "The very act of creation must

have been the introducing of laws; but, *when the work was finished, those laws may have suffered some modification.*"[1]

We have seen that, while one section of apologists contend that belief in the miraculous is essential, other advocates of Christianity try to get rid of all difficulties by suggesting that such words as "miracles" and "supernatural" ought not to be used. In a paper on "The Effect of Science upon Christianity," which he has contributed to the *Christian Commonwealth*, the Rev. R. F. Horton, M.A., D.D., affirms that "the word 'supernatural' is ill-chosen," and he adds that "it is unknown in the New Testament, and introduces ideas which are alien to those of Christ." The word "miracles,"[2] he holds, is equally unfortunate, and represents a notion which is not contained in the New Testament terms "signs" and "mighty works." If this be not word-spinning, then what is? Does it matter whether we call the raising of Lazarus a "miracle" or a "sign"? Is the miraculous feeding of the multitudes rendered more credible if we call it a natural instead of a supernatural occurrence? Is not the whole point of the sign lost, too, if it be no longer supernatural—if it becomes a sort of juggling feat? Dr. Horton leaves us in no doubt as to the object of his play upon words. He aims at disposing of the difficulties connected with Christian miracles by affirming that everything in nature is miraculous. He observes: "There is no miracle in the New Testament so amazing as the fact that from protoplasm

[1] Article "Genesis."

[2] *Miraculum* means merely a wonderful thing. It is certainly a proper translation of σημεῖα (signs) and *τέρατα* (wonders), as used by New Testament writers.

has developed the spiritual life of the saint." He is voicing one of the latest pleas of the "advanced" apologists—a plea which is transparently vain and futile. Development from protoplasm, like all the other wonders of the universe, takes place in accordance with natural laws more or less perfectly understood; and these things have no sort of connection with the "signs" and "mighty works" of the New Testament. Miracles are rejected not because they are amazing, but because they are contradictory to experience and at variance with the laws of nature. The scientist would accept the possibility of miracles, if adequate evidence were forthcoming. But so far he considers the "reign of law" to be an established scientific fact, and he is naturally loth to conclude, without the strongest evidence, that, after all, he has been deceived. Much less would he come to such a conclusion when there is not even a particle of trustworthy evidence. There is the significant circumstance, too, that the laws now discovered were unknown at the time of the alleged performance of miracles, and that the belief in miracles, and in the supposed continuance of miracles, varies in inverse proportion to knowledge.

§ 3. *The Fundamental Miracles.*

The above samples of apologetics fairly represent the various ways in which miracles are now explained. Even if the reasoning were sound, it would hardly serve to strengthen the arguments for those miracles which cannot and must not be explained away—the miracles on which are based the central doctrines of the Christian Faith. Christianity stands or falls

according as the Resurrection and Ascension are facts or not. The Rationalist's criticisms have been presented in many articles and books, but perhaps nowhere more clearly and forcibly than in the well-known work, *Supernatural Religion;* and it is worthy of note that these criticisms have been further strengthened by the latest "Higher Criticism," as set forth in the articles on the Resurrection and Ascension narratives in the *Encyclopædia Biblica.* I have specially referred to *Supernatural Religion,* because this book created a considerable stir in theological circles when it first appeared, some years ago, and also because its arguments are *popularly* supposed to have been completely demolished by Bishop Lightfoot in his *Essays on the Work Called "Supernatural Religion."* But—and here is a good instance of the ease with which the laity can be deceived—if anyone will take the trouble only to glance at these two works, he will find, to his astonishment, that the whole of the overwhelmingly important portion of the book under review, such as the chapters on miracles, on the Resurrection, on the Incarnation, and on the Ascension, has received no attention! Besides, there is *A Reply to Dr. Lightfoot's Essays.*

THE RESURRECTION.

Advanced modern criticism shows that the Resurrection can no longer be regarded as an historical fact, the evidence being unreliable. This is the sober opinion of professors of theology formed on the results of the most careful research, and with no preconceived opinion as to its scientific impossibility. What have the apologists to say to this? While the obvious discrepancies and scantiness in the Resurrection accounts are left practically unexplained, the old

argument from the "empty tomb"[1] is being discarded as worthless by the best scholars. Again the new science of psychology robs "the appearances," supposing that they ever occurred, of any meaning that could be construed into a proof of the Resurrection. Only one argument of any account is left, and on this the apologist chiefly pins his faith, more than on anything else. A certain contemporary of Christ wrote some letters in which he shows a firm belief in the Resurrection. His name was Paul. The evidence of this one man[2] is considered sufficient to substantiate a miracle, which is contrary to all human experience, and upon the truth of which depend the Christian Faith and our hope of immortality! There are critics who could not accept this evidence, for the simple reason that they conclude that we possess no Epistles of Paul; that the writings which bear his name are pseudepigrapha, containing seemingly historical data from the life and labours of the Apostle borrowed from *Acts of Paul*—a work containing, so far as is known to us, both truth and fiction.[3] Less advanced criticism lays down the broad thesis that all the Pauline

[1] See *Encyclopædia Biblica* article "Gospels," paragraph 138 (*c*). If the sanitary custom of cremation had been in vogue, how incalculably it would have affected the whole question!

[2] Moreover, St. Paul was not present himself on any of the occasions of the alleged appearances; and, except with regard to his own particular "religious experience," his evidence is therefore hearsay. The statement that Jesus was seen by 500 brethren at once is of little value, as St. Paul omits to mention what steps he took to ascertain the accuracy of his information—who the individuals were, what were the various impressions made upon them, etc. The appearance to 500 brethren is not mentioned in any of the Gospels. That Paul heard such a report, and that the majority of the witnesses still survived, does not prove that the report was true, or, if true, that the 500 had clear and unmistakable evidence of Christ's presence.

[3] Article "Paul" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Four of the Pauline Epistles are, however, pretty generally accepted. Five are hotly disputed; Professor Loofs, for example, rejects them.

epistles are real letters written by him, but that "Paul, who reckoned the future of this present world not by millennia or centuries, but by a few short years, had not the faintest surmise of the part his letters were destined to play in the providential ordering of the world."[1]

Accepting the genuineness of the Epistles, and therefore of the passage in 1 Cor. xv. 3–8, let us pause and think over the chief features of the argument. In the first place, it seems to me that St. Paul, having been a contemporary of the Messiah, really only adds to our perplexities. When there were so many who were eye-witnesses of His life, why should God single out one who was not thus favoured as His chief witness for all posterity? He was living at the same time and in the same country as Christ, and yet never knew him. Surely it stands to reason that an eye-witness is of more value than a mere visionary who wrote letters revealing a remarkable ignorance of the greater part of the narrative of the Gospels, and indeed of the whole body of teachings there ascribed to Jesus. That St. Paul would believe in the Resurrection before he took up the Christian cause goes without saying; but that he believed everything he heard from the followers of Christ, and everything he thought he heard when in a trance, does not, I fear, amount to much in the way of evidence—and especially so when we know that this was an age when the resurrection of any great prophet was taken to be a normal event. How often, I wonder, in the world's history have not the disciples of great teachers attributed miraculous powers to their beloved master even when with them alive, and still further magnified these

[1] Article "Epistolary Literature" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

powers after his death? How often has it not occurred that these same stories have been further exaggerated in the course of their transmission to succeeding generations? Nothing is more conceivable than that the Bible story may spuriously embellish the real life of Jesus as much as the mythical accounts of Buddha, for instance, spuriously embellish the real life of Prince Siddârtha. Of all old-world legends, the resurrection of a virgin-born Saviour was the most widespread.[1] Saul, the Pharisee, would have been imbued with this prevalent notion, and so could never get away from the thought that some kind of propitiation had to be made for the sins of men. Time and again a terrible suspicion must have crossed his mind —what if he were committing a heinous crime in persecuting the Christians? What if, after all, the Crucified One were the real Saviour of mankind? Doubts such as these may well have deeply agitated him. The living figure so often described to him by the Christians must have stood out before him. On his own testimony, as well as that of the *Acts*, he was prone to visions and other ecstatic conditions (2 Cor. xii. 1–4; 1 Cor. xiv. 18; Acts ix. 12, xvi. 9, xxii. 17, xxvii. 23). What more natural than that after his "religious experience" near Damascus he should be convinced that he had been specially favoured by an interview with the Saviour?

So many "spiritual experiences" of a like nature are on record that it is difficult to know which is the best to select for comparison. Professor Huxley, in his essay on "The Value of Witness to the Miraculous," takes the cases of Eginhard (born about

[1] Fully discussed, in connection with the Progressive Revelation theory, in Chap. IV.

A.D. 770), who wrote *The History of the Translation of the Blessed Martyrs of Christ, S.S. Marcellinus and Petrus;* and George Fox, who, about the year 1647, heard voices and saw visions which assured him that "there is a living God who made all things." Perhaps the case of Emanuel Swedenborg[1] may be worth a moment's consideration. He was the son of a bishop, and carefully educated. Endowed with unusual intellectual powers and an iron constitution, he acquired vast stores of learning. From early childhood he evinced a serious turn of mind, combined with a remarkable tendency to indulge in religious speculations. Eventually he received an extraordinary "call" in the shape of a vision. This converted the scientific inquirer into a supernatural prophet. He was now the mouthpiece of God. "The Lord Himself hath called me, who was graciously pleased to manifest Himself to me, His unworthy servant, in a personal appearance in the year 1745." "I have never," he says in his work on *True Christian Religion*, "received anything appertaining to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word." Swedenborg was a man who won the respect, confidence, and love of all who came in contact with him. He had a peculiarly abstract metaphysical character of mind, and was firmly convinced that he had "conversed with spirits" and "seen the Lord." So was Martin Luther perfectly convinced that he had seen the Devil when he threw his ink-pot at him. So was

[1] Swedenborgians (the New Jerusalem Church) are to be found scattered throughout almost every part of Christendom. In England, principally in Lancashire and Yorkshire, there are seventy-five societies with 6,063 registered members. John Wesley, whose followers throughout the world to-day number 30,000,000, was also a visionary.

the peasant girl of Lourdes[1] convinced that she had seen the Virgin Mary. So is Evan Roberts convinced that he has seen his Saviour. So have many good Christians from time to time been convinced that they have seen Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels. Father Ignatius, the Evangelist monk, may be, as I have heard him called, an emotional wreck; but he is also a most earnest Christian, and he is quite sure that he has seen the Virgin Mary.[2] Thousands and thousands of heathens as well as Christians have had such visions of their saviours; but such experiences could scarcely be brought forward seriously as a proof of the existence of the divinities believed to have been seen, or of their resurrection after a life upon earth. Visual and auditory hallucinations are now the subject of a searching inquiry by the Society for Psychical Research, and, willing as some of its members are to explain metapsychical phenomena by the simple theory of the spiritists,[3] the

[1] On one occasion early in the history of the third Republic, nearly forty prelates, headed by the Papal Nuncio, and surrounded by a host of clergy, met in a great open place at Lourdes to crown the statue of the Virgin, the Nuncio performing the coronation in the presence of 60,000 or 70,000 people. Again, quite recently, on March 27th, 1905, in the presence of 20,000 persons, Pius X. inaugurated the facsimile of the Grotto of Lourdes, which has been erected on the hillside in the Vatican gardens. An hallucination experienced by a peasant girl has been worked up into a cult equal to anything in the Middle Ages, because it is peculiarly fitted to excite enthusiasm for the Church among the ignorant. Is it not amazing to think that this farce still continues as so realistically described by Zola in *Lourdes*? When we see how easily the delusions of a simple peasant may be magnified into a fact substantiated by miracles, does it not throw a baleful light upon the beginnings of Christianity? Healing festivals are also common in the Greek Church. One such, in the island of Tenos, is graphically described in the *Treasury* magazine for May, 1905.

[2] Eight persons in all testify to the apparition of the Virgin Mary in the Abbot's meadow at Llanthony on September 15th, 1880.

[3] Dr. Moncure Conway relates, in his *Autobiography*, how it was

growing opinion is that these apparitions and voices are purely hallucinatory and due to causes which are not extra-human.

As Mr. Lowes Dickinson pertinently remarks when speaking of "Conversions" in his article on Revelations, in the *Independent Review*: "The important question is whether the belief of the recipient in the evidential value of the experience is justified; and I think that a little consideration will show that it is not so, for it is noticeable that the truth supposed to be revealed in the moment of conversion is commonly, if not invariably, the *reflection of the doctrine or theory with which the subject, whether or no he has accepted it, has hitherto been most familiar. I have never heard, for example, of a case in which a Mohammedan or a Hindoo, without having ever heard of Christianity, has had a revelation of Christian truth.* Conversion, in fact, it would seem, is not the communication of a *new* truth; it is the presentation of ideas already familiar in such a way that they are accompanied by an irresistible certainty that they are true.....A religious revelation cannot be distinguished from what would be admitted to be the hallucinations of disease. A man may be convinced, with equal assurance, that he is a poached egg or a saint; that he has a mission to assassinate the king or redeem the world; that he is eternally damned or eternally saved; that he has had a vision of the Virgin Mary or a vision of Nirvana."

Another argument for considering the Resurrection as an historical fact is that brought forward by the

a spiritualist *séance* which made him realise the kind of frenzy that took possession of those early Christians who really believed that a dead man had returned to life.

Rev. D. S. Margoliouth. The learned Professor argues in the *Expositor* that the Gospel narrative is located within historic times. So are the narratives of King Arthur (the Celtic Messiah), or William Tell, or Robin Hood; but historians are silent about all these narratives, sacred and profane alike. There was probably a real Arthur, however different from the hero of the trouvères, and a real Robin Hood, however now enlarged and disguised by the accretion of legend. Similarly there was a real Jesus Christ; but the marvellous event of His resurrection is *unrecorded by any of the celebrated historians of the period.*

The final argument is that "the Resurrection is, so to speak, of a piece with the whole character and the claims of Christ.....Even had we no Testament at all, we should be obliged to postulate something very much like either the Resurrection or the belief in the Resurrection in order to account for Christianity." No one disputes, I should think, this necessity for the Resurrection, if we are to remain Christians; but it is of the fact of the Resurrection that unfortunate doubters wish to be assured. The Bishop of Ripon argues that the miraculous accessories connected with the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ find a place only in the group of *secondary* witnesses, and adds significantly: "Our belief in Jesus Christ must be based upon moral conviction, not upon physical wonder." The meaning of this, in plain English, is clear enough, and I leave it for the honest-minded reader to decide whether this is a satisfactory foundation for the Christian dogmas. Is this what he was taught, or what his children are now being taught? Will it suffice? Can he

remain a Christian? Will his children, when they grow up and begin to think for themselves, remain Christians? The Dean of Westminster writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury: "Students of natural science find themselves left with St. Luke as the strongest historical evidence within the New Testament." Now, the author of St. Luke is also the author of the *Acts*, and his propensity for miraculous decoration is by no means reassuring. Besides, he was not an eye-witness. Then, too, we have Canon Henson, in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1904, informing us that "Any candid Christian reading through the accounts of the New Testament evidences.....cannot escape the inference that the evidence for the quasi-historical statements of the Creed is of a highly complicated, dubious, and even contradictory character." He then asks us: "Is an honest belief in the Resurrection really inconsistent with a reverent agnosticism as to the historical circumstances out of which in the first instance that belief arose?" The reply of an ordinary candid layman is, I think, sufficiently obvious. Similarly, Abbé Loisy, the champion of advanced theology in the Roman Catholic Church, considers the Resurrection to be a spiritual fact only, and not a fact of the historical order. "La Résurrection n'est pas proprement un fait d'ordre historique." The powerful article in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* also leads us to the same conclusion.

Those who believe in the fact of the Resurrection, and have not Canon Henson's reverent agnosticism concerning the event, must believe also in all the facts related in connection with it, including the account of Jesus having eaten and having been touched, and of his bodily ascent up into the clouds. If any one

portion of the story be considered incredible or untrustworthy, the whole collapses. It may be useful, therefore, to put to ourselves some questions concerning any one of the many marvellous accessories of the Resurrection. How few of us have ever had our belief tested by searching questions such as a cultured heathen would put if we tried to convert him?[1] For instance, what would you reply if you were asked by an intelligent native of India, China, or Japan: "Who were the saints of whom Matthew speaks as having risen from their graves? To whom did they appear? And how was it that their graves were opened as Jesus died, while their bodies did not come out till after His Resurrection? What also became

[1] Persons who have never spent their lives, or a portion of their lives, among the heathen, have never had their faith put to the fullest test, for in such an environment they would find faith's difficulties considerably enhanced. I remember, a few days after my arrival in India, a certain Bishop looking me in the face and, with a kindly hand upon my shoulder, saying: "You will find life much more difficult in India." He referred, of course, to the religious life, and was quite right, although, probably, he was thinking chiefly of the example that I should find set me by my fellow Christians; while, as mine was largely a camp life, it was more the insight into the belief of my native companions which affected me. There, all around you, are simple people believing in what you know to be absurd; you are brought face to face with ignorance and superstition; you see how faith can be misplaced, and how trusting natures can be deceived. It sets you thinking whether, after all, you too may not be deceived; whether the possession of an unlimited capacity for faith has the virtue in it which the priest tells you it has, and whether faith is a reliable guide. Should you attempt to convert an educated native, you not only find that the task is hopeless, but that you are asking him to accept a belief which is as unfounded and unproven as the one he already holds. Anyone wishing to form some idea of an experience of this sort should read *The Bible: Is it the Word of God?* by Thomas Lumsden Strange, formerly a judge of the High Court of Madras. The way the observations are cast in the shape of a conversation between a student of the Bible and a cultured native of India brings home many Bible difficulties which largely escape the notice and consideration of the devout. I have taken my illustration from this book.

of them afterwards?" To this the only candid reply possible would be: "I am unable to give you any information on this subject. Their not appearing till after Jesus rose from death would seem to have been introduced so as not to give them the precedence over Him in the exercise of the privilege of resurrection. He is said to be 'the first that should rise from the dead' (Acts xxvi. 23), 'the first fruits of them that slept' (1 Cor. xv. 20), 'the first-born from the dead' (Col. i. 18)." This, however, would hardly satisfy your questioner, who would reply: "Your inability to give me this information excites my suspicions, and your further statements seem to me to be very clumsy. To mark and enhance the death of the Messiah, nature is said to be convulsed, and graves thrown open; but the exit of the saints who were to come out of them is restrained till He should first have made His egress from the tomb three days later. And, after all, He had no such precedence in resurrection, for several persons are said to have been raised from the dead by the prophets of old and by Himself; two passed into heaven without ever being in their graves, and one of them—namely, Elias—appeared to Him with Moses in risen life at the time of His transfiguration. May I ask, Are the disturbances of nature which are said to have occurred at the crucifixion—namely, the preternatural darkness for three hours and the earthquake—mentioned by historians of the time?" You would have to confess, "They are not."[1] Thus you would fail to convert your heathen interlocutor, whose final fling at you would be: "That seems to demonstrate that nothing of the kind could really

[1] Details on this point will be found in the next chapter, § 5.

have occurred. Moreover, had there been such phenomena, the other evangelists would not have failed to support their position with these divine manifestations."

THE ASCENSION.

If apologetics dealing with the Resurrection are unconvincing,[1] still more so are those regarding the Ascension. There is little or no attempt to explain the meagreness of the Gospel narratives, how all mention of it is omitted in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John; and one vague sentence is all we are given in St. Mark and St. Luke. In "The Acts" the "St. Luke" writer furnishes the detail that "a cloud received him out of their sight," and that, "as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." In these days "ascending up" has no meaning for us. Candidly, if the writer had had our astronomical knowledge, would these words ever have been written? Certainly they would not. Then is the Ascension a fact or is it not? How is it possible that St. Matthew and St. John could have remained silent regarding such an event if they had really witnessed it? Or granting, in the case of the writer of "St. John,"

[1] As Mr. Cassels remarks in his book, *Supernatural Religion*, "The direct evidence is hurried over, and a mass of assertions and assumptions, the greater part of which is utterly untenable and inadmissible, is woven into specious and eloquent pleading, and does duty for substantial testimony."

that he was not St. John the Apostle, though he distinctly says he was, it is still astounding that he should have omitted to record such important evidence of Christ's divinity, if it was an accepted fact at the time he wrote.

Archdeacon Wilson, in a paper read at the Diocesan Conference at Manchester, October 22nd, 1903, asks: "What do we mean in our Creed when we say: 'He came down from heaven'? We explain away 'down,' we explain away 'heaven' in the sense in which the word was originally used. What do we mean by 'Descended into Hell'? by 'Sitteth on the right hand of God'?.....Spiritual truths are spiritually discerned, and do not admit of final intellectual definitions. We can only avert the rejection of theology by recognising its limitations." Is it possible for the bulk of humanity, I ask, to possess the requisite spiritual discernment? Is it not far more likely that, with the spread of education, they will finally reject theology?

Leaving aside the thoroughly unreliable nature of the Bible accounts of the Ascension, consider how easy it is for the superstitious, through optical illusions or subjective visions (or whatever name it may please the neologist to give to these "experiences"), to be honestly convinced of the occurrence of a supernatural event, and to take care that it should lose nothing of its marvellous character in the telling. Only the other day the good people of Sudja saw a mighty iris-coloured cross appear over the cathedral during divine service, and regarded the phenomenon as a sign of heaven's resolve to bestow victory upon Christian Russia. This "miracle" was witnessed by all the notabilities of the city, who forwarded a description to General Kuropatkin in a document duly attested with their

signatures. For the stupendous and absurdly impossible miracle of the Ascension we have not even got a full description, much less an attested document. Is it not time that we should ask ourselves the plain question, Do we really believe that an extraordinary levitation occurred, and that Jesus Christ was seen to be rising in the air until some passing clouds concealed Him from view? If we do not so believe, why do we say we do when we repeat the Creed? Why do we pretend we do when we sit in church and listen to the account of the Ascension, and perhaps to a sermon on it? Why do we allow our friends to think that we do so believe? Why is Ascension Day one of our Holy Days? And, finally, why do we teach, or allow others to teach, our children what we know to be untrue? Surely these are serious questions to ask ourselves.

THE INCARNATION.

There remains the miracle of the Virgin-birth. That this is under dispute among Christian theologians is notorious, and the controversy has but served to show with ever-increasing clearness how untrustworthy is the evidence for this miracle. Christian Biblical experts inform us that it "belongs to the lowest strata of the New Testament tradition," and that no trace of the story can be found before 120 A.D. In other words, that it is an obvious interpolation in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

"Moral fitness" appears to be the only argument that we can fall back upon, and this is now the apologists' last stronghold. If they belong to the Church of England, they should remember that it was this identical line of reasoning that gave rise to

the "pious opinion" that the Mother of Christ had herself been miraculously preserved from all taint of original sin from the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother. As Bernard of Clairvaux vigorously argued (in 1140 A.D.), "On the same principle you would be obliged to hold that the conception of her ancestors, in an ascending line, was also a holy one, since otherwise she would not have descended from them worthily." Yet, in spite of the absurdity, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was formally defined, as a dogma binding on the acceptance of all the faithful, by the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (December 8th, 1854). Certainly there is a moral fitness in the Virgin-birth of the Son of God, and it is also fit that His mother should have been immaculately conceived; and those who hold to the one doctrine may well hold to the other.

Some apologists appear almost in despair of a continuance of belief in this dogma. The learned Dr. Sanday says we ought to regard the Virgin-birth "as one of those hidden mysteries which, whether or not God wills that we should believe them now, He has, at all events, willed that men should believe in times past." Is not this tantamount to giving up belief in the Virgin-birth?

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Because God once willed that men should have all kinds of absurd superstitions, and now wills that they should acknowledge their absurdity, are we, as Dr. Sanday appears to recommend, to keep up the pretence of believing in them on the ground that they are hidden mysteries? Surely not; but, speaking of mysteries, there is one which ought to be cleared, or

at least receive a much fuller investigation than it has yet received at the hands of the Church. I refer to the fact that, ages before the Christian era, certain miracles were believed to have taken place, and that these were of *precisely the same nature as those recorded in the Bible*. For instance, numerous saviours were believed to have been born of virgins, to have died for the sins of mankind, to have risen again from the dead, and to have ascended into heaven. Thus not only are the Bible miracles scientifically impossible; not only are they unsupported by anything approaching adequate evidence; not only do the specious explanations of apologists serve but to confirm our scepticism concerning them; but we find that they are not even original—that they form part of ancient superstitions. That these fresh grounds for suspecting the truth of Christianity are of the gravest character will be shown in the chapter on Comparative Mythology.

MODERN BIBLE CRITICISM

MODERN BIBLE CRITICISM

early part, as "not historical," when "what they mean is that it is not true." No subtle theories are required to support Dr. Wace's belief in Christianity, for even the first chapter of Genesis is, in his opinion, a "substantially accurate" account of "that which happened on earth before there were any men upon it," and "is the best proof that the Bible proceeded from God." He remains among the dwindling number of those who, in these days of Christian storm and stress, still cling to the old ideas about the Bible. His reasons for doing so are apparently similar to those given by "Roger" in a little pamphlet entitled *Roger's Reasons* (by John Urquhart), where it is sought to reconcile the Bible and Science at the expense of accuracy, logic, and common sense. For the obscurantist, belief is made easy, and the apologies for the Faith can be comparatively straightforward. For the "enlightened" the conditions are reversed.

An example of the advanced views of a Church of England divine, and of the objections to these views of a strictly orthodox Churchman, may prove instructive. Reviewing the Bishop of Winchester's book, *On Holy Scripture and Criticism*, the *Church Times* (of February 10th, 1905) pertinently observes: "Attacks upon the Gospel narratives of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, made with such persistence from within the Church, are ugly developments which were not anticipated in 1890. Yet, strange to say, there is no recognition of the new situation in the Bishop of Winchester's book."

This silence regarding points especially requiring explanation is, I fear, a common feature in religious apologetics. Look again at the reviewer's next remark: "The Bishop forgets that the truth of the

message is intimately connected with the authenticity of the record, and a critical theory which assails the one assails the other." Here, then, we have an elementary truth frankly recognised; and, in plain English, it means that, if the Bishop's criticisms be true, Christianity is untrue. Entering into more detail, the writer goes on to say: "For example, the Bible record of the Fall and the truth of our Lord's 'atoning death on the Cross' are closely connected with each other. Modern criticism discards the former as a myth, and indications abound on every side that the denial of the Fall[1] leads to a denial of the Atonement. It is not too much to say that the new method of interpreting the Bible has helped to overthrow belief in Christ as a Divine Redeemer. His redemptive work and mediatorial office have been thrust into the background."

The situation could not be put more lucidly. There is no hair-splitting or glozing here. The reviewer characterises this silence on crucial points as "grave omissions," and he might have added that such omissions are calculated to arouse suspicions of the Faith. He continues: "Again the Bishop says:—

> Think of the use made of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Apostles in the Acts, or by St. Paul in his Epistles. It is ever the spiritual and moral lesson.

It is by no means 'ever' the spiritual and moral lesson only. Both in the Book of the Acts and St. Paul's Epistles the historical and predictive portions of the Jewish Scriptures are constantly appealed to, and used as the basis of argument. The suggestion

[1] Difficulties connected with the Fall are fully commented on in Chapter V.

that the Apostles attached little importance to the letter is far from being borne out by the evidence. One of the chief things in which they differ from writers of the modern school is their use of Old Testament history and prediction. Compare the place which prophecy occupies in the Epistle to the Romans with the place it holds in the Bishop of Winchester's book, where no more than sixteen lines in 187 pages are allotted to it."

"Each of the Synoptic Gospels describes the scene at the Transfiguration, when Moses and Elias talked with our Lord in the sight of three of His disciples. St. Luke mentions that they talked about His approaching death. In the face of that narrative, those who say that our Lord knew no more of Moses than any Jew of the period are bound to explain how they reconcile the statement with the Evangelists' account of the Transfiguration. No Jewish scribe of the first century, A.D., could pretend to have seen or conversed with either Elijah or Moses. Bishop Ryle says of our Lord:—

> In His incidental references to Moses, He adopts the language of the Scribes.....He never displayed knowledge of facts which could not be possessed by those of His own time.....To His intellectual powers in His humanity there seem to have been assigned the natural barriers of the time in which he lived.

"The Bishop does not perceive apparently that these arguments cut both ways, so that they tell against our Lord's claim to foreknow the future quite as much as against His knowledge of the past. And we are entitled to ask how they can possibly be made to agree with the express testimony of the Evangelists that Moses and Elijah were seen in Christ's company, and 'spake of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.'"

I have quoted these apposite remarks at length because they will come with more force from the mouth of an orthodox believer than from anyone in doubt like myself. One cannot help wondering what the Bishop could have to urge in reply; for the ground is cut from under him by his own acceptance of so much of modern criticism. As he is a high dignitary of the Church, it is all the more puzzling. Referring to the remarks concerning Moses, it may be mentioned that, according to the critics, Moses is not a historical personage.[1] Whether the Bishop accepts this or not it is difficult to say; but apparently he does, from his desire to explain that, "in His references to Moses," Christ "adopts the language of the Scribes."

Dr. Driver's new book on *Genesis* has also called forth some adverse criticisms from the less advanced. For example, Dr. Lock, the Warden of Keble, enumerates several considerations in support of the general trustworthiness of the patriarchal narratives, and observes that the fact of inspiration, once admitted on the higher level of a moral and spiritual tone, may "well carry its influence over into details of fact, and turn the balance when otherwise uncertain." Personally, I very much doubt whether the general public, once informed of the truth, will ever be induced to look at facts through Dr. Lock's spiritual spectacles. Dr. Driver, it should be added, informs us that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were presumably monotheists, though their monotheism is rudimentary, and the terms in which they express themselves "suggest much riper spiritual capacities and experiences," being, "in some cases, *borrowed*

[1] See, for instance, art. "Moses," *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

evidently from the phraseology of a much later age." Can we depend upon such narrators to furnish us with true history? Commenting on Dr. Driver's "impossible interpretations" of the words, "it shall bruise thy head," and of "the story of the Fall," his reviewer in the *Church Times* asks: "Was it, or was it not, a promise made by God? This is the plain question which Dr. Driver's readers are forced to ask." Sceptical truthseekers, also, are asking the same question. When will they receive a "straight" answer?

§ 2. *A Summary of the Results of Bible Criticism.*

The general public know little or nothing of the results of Bible criticism. Why should they? Not only do they deem it a dull subject, but those who attend church are being informed from the pulpit that "the Gospels have been battered by years of criticism, but have come out of it stronger than ever."[1] It is easy enough to make statements of this kind, and, doubtless, they serve temporarily to quiet the fears of a congregation who know very little of the subject, and are only too glad to believe what they are told so authoritatively; but, unfortunately, such statements are, to put it mildly, misleading. The ordinary man is wofully ignorant of the "Higher Criticism." His ideas of Bible difficulties are mostly confined to common sense. He knows, perhaps, that scoffers of the London parks freethinking type gibe at Holy

[1] Quoted from a sermon by the Bishop of London in Fulham parish, Christmas Day, 1904. Compare this with Dr. Kirkpatrick's remark, p. 2 of his book, *The Divine Library of the Old Testament*: "It is true that the critical investigation of the Bible raises not a few questions of grave difficulty."

Writ, and he may himself have made fun of some passages that appear absurd; but here his knowledge of Bible criticism ceases. He is not aware that the critics are a body of the most erudite experts in theology, whose only motive for offering their opinion is to give to the world the result of their arduous research—the motives, in fact, of a Bruno, or a Darwin, or a Pasteur.

In view of this widespread ignorance, I propose to enumerate briefly a few of the results of modern criticism, and, in giving these results, I shall omit those arising from a study of comparative mythology and of evolution, as I have devoted separate chapters to that purpose.

A work has been issued lately which sums up the conclusions of Bible criticism—higher,[1] lower or textual, and historical. It is called the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Its four massive volumes set forth the new views, and support them by a mass of learning which deserves our serious consideration.[2] Space permits of

[1] "The adjective 'higher' (the sense of which is often misunderstood) has reference simply to the higher and more difficult class of problems, with which, as opposed to textual criticism, the 'higher' criticism has to deal" (see Preface to *The Higher Criticism*, being three papers by S. R. Driver, D.D., and A. F. Kirkpatrick, D.D.).

[2] In case the reader may jump to the conclusion that this is a work compiled by collecting the most heretical views from all parts of the globe (as I was informed by the librarian when I inquired for the book in a Cathedral library), let me call attention to the list of contributors, among whom will be found many English ministers of the Gospel. For instance:—

The Rev. Archibald R. S. Kennedy, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, Edinburgh.

The Rev. C. F. Burney, M.A., Lecturer in Hebrew, and Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford.

The Rev. Claude Hermann Walter Johns, M.A., Hon. Sec. Camb. Pupil Teachers' Centre.

The Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A., D.D., LL.D., Professor

my giving only a few notes of its conclusions, and but meagre details of the wealth of evidence in support of them.

The Creation Story a Myth.—The story of the Creation as given in Genesis originated in a stock of primitive myths common to the Semitic races.[1] Its coincidences with the Babylonian myth are so numerous that it is impossible to doubt the existence of a real historical connection between them. Many indications show that not till after the Exile in the

of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow.

The Very Rev. J. A. Robinson, D.D., Dean of Westminster.

The Rev. Owen Charles Whitehouse, M.A., Principal and Professor of Biblical Exegesis and Theology in the Countess of Huntingdon's College, Cheshunt, Herts.

The Rev. R. H. Charles, M.A., D.D., Professor of Biblical Greek, Trinity College, Dublin.

The Rev. Samuel Rolles Driver, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

The Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, Canon of Rochester.

The Rev. T. Witton Davies, B.A., Ph.D., Professor of Old Testament Literature, North Wales Baptist College, Bangor; Lecturer in Semitic Languages, University College.

The Rev. William E. Addis, M.A., Lecturer in Old Testament Criticism, Manchester College, Oxford.

The Rev. William Henry Bennett, Litt.D., D.D., Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature, Hackney College, London, and Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, New College, London.

The Rev. William Sanday, D.D., LL.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

The Rev. A. B. Davidson, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis, United Free Church New College, Edinburgh.

The Rev. George Buchanan Gray, M.A., Professor of Hebrew, Mansfield College, Oxford.

The rapid advance of Bible criticism in late years is well seen by comparing articles in Dr. W. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (1860), in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, signed W. R. S. (between 1875 and 1888), and in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (1899 to 1903).

[1] In the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1905, Canon Cheyne quotes from Eduard Stricken's last work, *Beiträge zur orientalischen Mythologie*, as follows: "There are Greenlandish and Polynesian legends which bring us nearer to the comprehension of a Biblical passage than the cognate Babylonian legends."

sixth century B.C. did the story take its present shape.

The Patriarchs Unhistorical Figures.—Then, again, all the stories of the Patriarchs are legendary; they may contain some truth, though how much will probably never be known; to suppose them entirely true is to throw historical criticism altogether overboard. Dr. Peters is the Episcopal rector of a large parish in New York, who has done good service in the past, both as Professor of Biblical Literature in the Episcopal Seminary at Philadelphia and as the first leader of the expedition to Babylonia sent out in 1888 by the University of Pennsylvania. He has lately written a book called *The Early Hebrew Story: Its Historical Background.* Canon Cheyne, reviewing this book in the *Hibbert Journal* for January, 1905, remarks: "It will be granted that Dr. Peters's view of the origination of the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and, to some extent, of Joseph, in myths, legends, and traditions of sanctuaries, is a sound one."

Book of Genesis Legendary.—The book of Genesis is a composite narrative based on older records long since lost. It appears to have been compiled in the seventh century B.C., and to have been added to again later. The story of the Deluge is a Hebrew version of the Babylonian epic.

Book of Exodus Legendary.—The book of Exodus, too, is another composite legend which has long been mistaken for history. Sober history gives no warrant for supposing that the signs and wonders wrought by Moses ever occurred, that the first-born of Egypt were ever slain, or that Pharaoh was ever drowned in the Red Sea.

Moses a Legendary Character.—The historical character of Moses has not been established, and it is doubtful whether the name is that of an individual or that of a clan. The alleged origin of the Ten Commandments is purely legendary; it is probable that they were framed not earlier than the time of Amos. It is admitted even by conservative critics that the original worship of the Israelites was not of an ethical character.

One of the first suspicions that ever crossed my mind was with regard to the sudden and complete disappearance of the "two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God."[1] Later on, when I knew of the Moabite stone[2] and the Rosetta stone,[3] and especially when I learnt that there were inscriptions on bricks and cylinders of a far earlier date than that ascribed to the giving of the Ten Commandments, the old perplexity returned with added force. I remember, too, the same feeling of dissatisfaction and suspicion as I gazed on the clearly-cut Pali inscriptions in the Buddhist caves near Poona, and thought of those lost tables said to have been inscribed by the finger of God. I once put the question to a well-read clerical friend of mine: "How can these tables, written by the finger of God or by His direct inspiration, have been lost? How is it that they have simply disappeared without a word of explanatory

[1] Exodus xxxi. 18 and xxxii. 16. Or, to be precise, these having been broken and their fragments considered of no value at the time, the duplicates carefully prepared and inscribed to the dictation of God Himself (Exodus xxxiv.).

[2] Believed to date from about 850 B.C. The inscription records the victories of King Mesha over the Israelites.

[3] Erected in honour of Ptolemy Epiphanes, 106 B.C. Famous as having furnished the first key for the interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

comment in the Bible? It is inconceivably strange. What a witness would they not have been to the truth of the Old Testament account, and to the Divine authority for the Commandments!" His reply was: "It would never have done for these stones to have been preserved, for they would have become objects of worship." Granted that they might have become objects of adoration, which is worse—to worship faked relics such as the water in which Joseph of Arimathea washed the blood-stained body of Jesus, portions of wood from the true Cross, bits from the crown of thorns, and thousands of odd pieces of bone from the anatomy of the Saints;[1] or to venerate stones that

[1] Diaries recounting the sights seen by a lord of high degree in 1465 were published in 1851 by the Literary Society of Stuttgart. They include an interesting account of all the shrines and relics seen during his travels through Western Europe. The account of the relics which he saw in our own Canterbury Cathedral admits of no curtailment: "First we saw the head-band of the Blessed Virgin, a piece of Christ's garment, and three thorns from His Crown; then we saw the bedstead of St. Thomas and his brain, and the blood of St. Thomas and of St. John the Apostles. We saw also the sword with which St. Thomas of Canterbury was beheaded; the hair of the Mother of God, and a part of the Sepulchre. There was also shown to us a part of the shoulder of the Blessed Simeon, who bore Christ in his arms; the head of the blessed Lustrabena; one leg of St. George; a piece of the body and the bones of St. Lawrence; a leg of the Bishop of St. Romanus; a cup of St. Thomas, which he had been accustomed to use in administering the Sacrament at Canterbury; a leg of the Virgin Milda; a leg of the Virgin Euduarda. We also saw a tooth and a finger of St. Stephen the Martyr; bones of the Virgin Catherine, and oil from her sepulchre, which is said to flow to this day; hair of the blessed Virgin [*sic!*] Magdalene; a tooth of St. Benedict; a finger of St. Urban; the lips of one of the infants slain by Herod; bones of the blessed Clement; bones of St. Vincent. Very many other things were also shown to us, which are not set down by me in this place." Very many other things have also been shown to me during my travels abroad which are not set down by me in this place, and I can only say that the grotesqueness of the frauds that are perpetrated is only equalled by the gross ignorance and credulity of the worshippers. The number of these "relics" scattered over Christendom must amount to thousands upon thousands. To stop the traffic in them, there is now a regulation that if you buy a relic you commit mortal

would at least have had the merit of being genuine? Why are we left without any reliable evidences of God's miraculous revelation of Himself to men, while we have abundant evidence for occurrences of trifling importance to mankind that happened thousands of years before the alleged revelation? Hammurabi (a Babylonian monarch who flourished two thousand years or more before the Christian era) inscribed a very excellent, if somewhat drastic, code of laws upon a pillar of black diorite, and we have now got the stone and read the inscriptions;[1] but the stone inscribed *by God* is lost!

The Book of Deuteronomy.—Evidence of every kind concurs to prove that in its original form it was a product of the seventh, not of the fifteenth, century B.C. In its present form, Deuteronomy is a composite and considerably modified version of the older work. Originally it may have consisted merely of the long speech attributed to Moses, and this may have been the book which was "found" in the temple in the reign of Joshua, the rest of the work being added shortly afterwards.

As it is difficult to believe that such a work would have remained in the temple undiscovered for eight hundred years, is it not reasonable to conclude that the book was placed there by men who thought the time ripe for religious reforms—in fact, that a "pious fraud" was perpetrated?

sin. The relics are still sold, however; only the price is said to be for the frame or for the trouble, or something to that effect. For a description of *La Bottega del Papa* (the Pope's shop) or *La Santa Bottega* (the Holy Shop) see Dr. Robertson's book, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*.

[1] For a popular account of this interesting discovery (upon the site of Susa, the ancient city of the Persian kings, in December, 1901) see *The Hammurabi Code*, by Chilperic Edwards.

The Psalms, a Composite Book.—The fond delusion that all the Psalms were written by David (though why we should be anxious to ascribe what is really of much ethical value to a person confessedly immoral I never could understand) has been entirely dispelled. It is doubtful whether David wrote any of the Psalms.

Poetry and Prophetic Literature.—The book of Job is not a literary unity, nor was it written with any particular purpose; it is not a manufacture, but a growth.

Jonah is a Jewish *midrash*, or tradition, like the histories of Tobit and Susanna, and was certainly written after the Exile. Even orthodox clergymen now admit (in private) that the Jonah story is a fairy tale.

The great book of Isaiah is the work of several authors.

The book of Daniel was once assumed to be the most definitely prophetical of the Old Testament writings—a notion which is seriously discounted by the discovery that it was beyond question written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, *after or during* the happening of the events which were supposed to be foretold, and nearly 500 years after the time of its supposed author. It is questionable whether such a person as Daniel ever existed; but it is certain that his adventure in the den of lions, and that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace, are as fabulous as any in the collection of Æsop.

"As a rule," says Canon Cheyne, "the prophets directly connect the final restoration with the removal of the sins of their own age, and with the accomplishment of such a work of judgment as lies within their own horizon; to Isaiah the last troubles are those of

the Assyrian invasion; to Jeremiah the restoration follows on the exile to Babylon; Daniel connects the future glory with the overthrow of the Greek monarchy."[1]

Referring to non-Christian parallels to the belief in a Messiah, Canon Cheyne draws special attention to a Babylonian parallel, and concludes that "it is historically very conceivable that a Babylonian belief may be the real parent both of this and of all other Messianic beliefs within the sphere of Babylonian influence."[2]

The manner in which these so-called prophets can be looked upon as prophets is explained elsewhere[3] as follows: "The prophets in the Old Testament, being inspired to interpret human needs, became unconscious prophets of the Christ.....It is quite true that prophecy explained in this way is no longer available for the truth of Christianity to the same extent that it once was—at any rate, for the convincing of unbelievers."

New Testament Chronology.—We do not know exactly when Jesus was born, or when He died, or how long He ministered. As to the birth of Jesus, the only account which claims to give indications of date rests on a series of mistakes. No census was possible under Herod, and none took place under "Cyrenius" until A.D. 7. The only results which have a high degree of probability are the date A.D. 30 for the death of Jesus, and the period of about one year[4] for the length of His public ministry.

[1] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. "Messiah," p. 3058, par. 2.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 3063, par. 10.
[3] In *Studies in the Character of Christ*, by Rev. C. H. Robinson, Hon. Canon of Ripon and Editorial Secretary to the S.P.G.
[4] Conservative opinion estimates it to be three years.

The Virgin Birth.—The Gospels themselves afford the amplest justification for a criticism of their narratives. Jesus Himself made no appeal to His supposed miraculous birth. The only two verses in the first chapter of St. Luke which clearly express the idea of a supernatural birth so disturb the connection that we are impelled to regard them as an interpolation. The genealogy of Joseph, given in the first Gospel, is prior in date to the story of the Virgin Birth, and could have been drawn up only while he was regarded as the real father of Jesus. For the whole birth and childhood story of St. Matthew, in its every detail, it is possible to trace a pagan substratum. Among the Jews, generally, the notion of supernatural birth did not attach to their conception of the Messiah; but in the school of thought of which Philo was head[1] there were traditions that every child of promise was born of a virgin. St. Paul's statement also, that Jesus was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, cannot be reconciled with the account of his having been born of a virgin. It is Joseph, and not Mary, whose descent is traced from the son of Jesse. There is no recorded adoration of the Virgin by St. Paul, or, for the matter of that, by any of the Apostles or disciples.

As I have already said, space does not permit me to enter into details; but the weight of evidence against the Virgin Birth can be gauged by the fact that of late the minds of Christian divines themselves have been much exercised on the subject. I have alluded to this in the previous chapter on Miracles.[2]

[1] *Re* the acknowledged influence of Philo's school, see note 1 on p. 125.

[2] See also remarks on the Virgin Birth in Chapter IV., § 2.

Jesus.—Professor A. B. Bruce,[1] writer of the article on "Jesus," points out that, while the Gospels may be regarded as, in the main, a trustworthy tradition, they are unreliable in many of their details. Those details turn out to be the all-important ones, for he goes on to show that: The Temptation is a symbolic representation of a spiritual experience. The story of the Crucifixion is not pure truth, but truth mixed with doubtful legend. The night trial, the mocking, the incident of Barabbas, the two thieves, and the preternatural concomitants of the death are picturesque accessories of doubtful authenticity. Christ's conceptions of Messiahship were greatly influenced by the later Isaiah. While His spiritual intuitions are pure truth valid for all ages, His language concerning the Father shows limitation of vision. His acts of healing are considered to be real,[2] though it does not follow that they were miraculous. Referring to the strange statement that Jesus declined to expound His parables to the people, lest they should be converted, we are assured that "it is not credible that Jesus would either cherish or avow such an inhuman intention, though it is possible that in His disappointment He may have expressed Himself in such a way as to be misunderstood."

This is all very well; but, if this be granted, we

[1] The late Rev. A. B. Bruce, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow.

[2] The writer's reason for this assumption seems slender enough—namely, that otherwise the family of Jesus would not have thought Him mad. The idea is that the relations of Jesus saw in Him a man more endowed with power over diseases than was good for His own health of body and mind. For science the question is: Can the acts ascribed to Jesus be accounted for by any known laws of nature? Can they not be explained by "mental therapeutics," or the emotional treatment of disease?

are naturally anxious to know in how many more matters Jesus may not have been misunderstood. What is the use of a revelation which can be misunderstood in this way? What can be the motive of the Omnipotent Revealer in allowing Himself to be misunderstood? Were not His hearers who misunderstood Him His own selected expositors?

We even find suspicion thrown on the supposed early belief in the divinity of Jesus. For the writer points out that, while in the Gospel of St. Luke Jesus is called "the Lord" about a dozen times, the earlier Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark refer to Him simply as "Jesus"—"a fact which seems to indicate the gradual evolution of the belief in His divinity."

The conclusions of Professor Schmiedel, one of the writers of the article on the Gospels, are still more destructive. He admits[1] that his criticisms "may have sometimes raised a doubt whether any credible elements were to be found in the Gospels at all," and that there are only nine passages which "might be called the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus." He admits also "the meagreness of the historical testimony regarding Jesus," as well "in canonical writings outside of the Gospels" as "in profane writers such as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny."

The Resurrection.[2]—The all-important subject of the "Resurrection" is treated by Professor P. W. Schmiedel, D.D., of Zürich, who tells us that the Gospel accounts "exhibit contradictions of the most glaring kind." The actuality of the Resurrection depends for its establishment upon these very

[1] See *Enc. Bib.*, art. "Gospels," par. 139.
[2] Discussed also in the chapter on Miracles.

narratives, and in such a case unimpeachable witnesses are naturally demanded. Such witnesses do not exist. The reality of the appearances has ever been in dispute. The account of the watch at the sepulchre and the sealing of the tomb is now given up as unhistorical even by those who accept the story as a whole. "The statements as to the empty tomb are to be rejected."[1] The silence of St. Paul with regard to these details is unaccountable, if the story of the Resurrection be true. For him nothing less than the truth of Christianity rested on the actuality of the Resurrection of Jesus. During his visit to Jerusalem he had had opportunities of acquiring knowledge relating to it, and it may naturally be assumed that, when endeavouring to prove to the Corinthians the truth of the Resurrection, he would state fully and clearly all that he knew about it. It is admitted on all hands that the appearance recorded by him was in the nature of a vision—a purely subjective experience. And it is well known that St. Paul uses the same Greek word to describe both the appearance to himself and the appearances to the original disciples, thereby implying the possibility that the latter also were of a visionary or subjective character. An apologetic tendency is perceptible in the Gospel account, and this may help to explain the rise of unhistorical elements. It is probable that, in the absence of knowledge, conjectures were freely made, and many questions asked, the replies to which were afterwards assumed to be facts.

The Gospels.—The article on the Gospels by Dr.

[1] *Enc. Bib.*, art. "Gospels," par. 138, on the Resurrection. The reasons for this conclusion are here explained at length, and also in par. 108.

E. A. Abbott[1] and Professor Schmiedel is crowded with damaging criticism. The view hitherto current that the four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and appeared thirty or forty years after the death of Jesus, can, it is stated, no longer be maintained. The four Gospels were compiled from earlier materials, which have perished, and the dates when they first appeared in their present form are given as follows:—Mark, certainly after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70[2]; Matthew, about 119 A.D.; Luke, between 100 and 110; and John, between 132 and 140. But, even if we accept more conservative opinions which place the earliest Gospel about 65 A.D., that would not, of course, make any material difference, nor affect the conclusions of criticism as to their *contents*. Some of their statements of fact are quite erroneous, and the data are often in direct contradiction to one another. The evangelists made it clear that they wrote with a "lack of concern for historical precision." The imperfection of the Gospel accounts is everywhere manifest. Even if His ministry lasted only a few months, He must have said a thousandfold more, and repeated His sayings with many variations. The text must not be taken as a trustworthy guide to His original meaning. It merely shows us what the evangelists or their predecessors believed Him to mean. The situations in which the words of Jesus are said to have been spoken cannot be implicitly accepted.

[1] The Rev. E. A. Abbott, author of various theological works, Hulsean Lecturer, Cambridge, 1876; Select Preacher, Oxford, 1877.

[2] The interpolation in the last chapter of St. Mark goes back far into the second century. It is important to bear in mind that none of the dates given by Dr. Harnack and other authorities apply to the Gospels exactly as we now have them.

Both St. Matthew and St. Mark seem to have read into the utterances of Jesus details borrowed from subsequent facts or controversies. The historical value of the third Gospel is also lowered by evidence of the writer's errors and misunderstandings. It has been widely assumed that it was written by the physician Luke,[1] and that Luke was a companion of Paul. This view of its Pauline character, however, can now be maintained only in a very limited sense. It is clear that the third Gospel and the Acts are by the same author,[2] but that author was not Luke.

In the fourth Gospel we find more ambiguities than in all the other three together. The story of the raising of Lazarus cannot be considered historical. In an age which appears to have been very prone to misunderstand metaphor and to materialise inner experiences, it is more than probable that expressions indicating spiritual death were assumed to imply physical death, and the growth of new feeling to imply a return of material life.

Again, we are plainly warned that "it is vain to look to the Church fathers for trustworthy information on the subject of the origin of the Gospels." This is an exceedingly grave admission when we

[1] In a lecture on "The Historical Accuracy of the Bible" (at Canterbury, December 4th, 1904) Dean Wace builds much of his New Testament argument upon St. Luke having been a doctor and companion of St. Paul. He goes so far as to consider that we have here undeniable testimony for the miracles which took place in the first century—namely, the testimony of *a medical* man who saw the miracles. For such an argument to have any relevancy, we can only suppose that Dr. Wace would as soon abide by the opinion of a medical man of the first century, in spite of his ignorance of science and trust in the supernatural, as by the opinion of the scientific and matter-of-fact medical man of the twentieth century.

[2] And this further invalidates the Gospel if, as it appears, all the really miraculous events described in the Acts are unreliable.

remember that these same untrustworthy fathers of the Church did the work of sifting the wheat from the chaff—settling what was and what was not canonical.[1]

It need hardly be said that these general conclusions, which are supported by evidence that has satisfied numerous Christian scholars, entirely do away with the idea that the Gospels are credible and trustworthy narratives.

The Acts of the Apostles.—The sections of this book in which the narrative is written in the first person plural (says Professor Schmiedel) can be implicitly accepted; but it is equally certain that they are not by the same hand as the rest of the book. Apart from the "we" sections, no statement merits immediate acceptance on the mere ground of its presence in the book. The speeches are constructed by the author in accordance with his own conceptions. This book does not come from a companion of St. Paul; its date may be set down as between A.D. 105 and 130.

The Epistles of St. Paul.—The genuineness of the Pauline Epistles does not appear to be so clear as was once universally supposed. Advanced criticism, Professor van Manen[2] tells us, in his elaborate article on "Paul," has learned to recognise that none of these Epistles are by him, not even the four generally regarded as unassailable. Van Manen's position,

[1] Yet we have a largely-supported proposal (initiated by Dean Wace) to appeal to the first six centuries for correcting disorders in the National Church! This proposal is, very sensibly I think, "publicly and earnestly deprecated" by the Council of the Church Association, who show that in those centuries "the adulteration of the Gospel" was inevitable. (See p. 181 of this book.)

[2] W. C. van Manen, D.D., Professor of Old Christian Literature and New Testament Exegesis, Leyden.

however, is exceptional. In the article on "Epistolary Literature" the Epistle to Philemon and the Epistles to the Philippians, Thessalonians, Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians, and even the Epistle to the Romans, are recognised as real letters written by St. Paul. The genuineness of four of the Epistles is, in any case, generally accepted. As these include the first Epistle to the Corinthians, this conclusion is of the greatest importance. The Bishop of London is "content to rest his case, for not being intellectually ashamed of the documentary evidence, on the four undisputed Epistles of St. Paul."[1]

The Apocalypse.—Criticism has clearly shown that the Book of Revelation can no longer be regarded as a literary unity, but is an admixture of Jewish with Christian ideas and speculations. Ancient testimony, that of Papias in particular, assumed the Presbyter John, and not the Apostle, to be its author.

This completes a summary of conclusions, arrived at by eminent Christian scholars of the more advanced school. Though they, or the majority of them, would be the last to make any such admission, the net result amounts practically to a surrender of the Christian dogmas.

§ 3. *By Whom the "Higher Criticism" is Accepted.*

These criticisms are, I repeat, the work not of anti-Christians, but of Christians, who have devoted themselves to Biblical research, and who are among the greatest living experts in that sphere of knowledge.

[1] Words uttered by the Bishop of London in his address to the St. Paul's Lecture Society, at the opening of a new session in 1904.

Canon Cheyne, one of the two editors of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, has now written a volume on *Bible Problems and the New Material for their Solution*, in which he appeals to Churchmen and scholars and all who are interested in Bible criticism for thoroughness of investigation. There can be no doubt that there is a crying need for this *thorough* investigation, which at present is being shirked. While the main results arrived at by the Higher Criticism are, it is true, largely accepted by enlightened divines, the usual policy so far has been not to disseminate such knowledge. On this I shall have more to say in the concluding chapter of this book.

Dr. Harnack in Germany, and M. Loisy in France, may be cited as types of liberal theologians who proclaim their acceptance of the Higher Criticism. They both detach Christianity from mere narrative, and seek to appreciate it as a spiritual reality, which appeals to the imagination, the emotions, and the soul. Dr. Harnack is the Professor of Church History in the University of Berlin, and member of the Royal Prussian Academy; and a book called *What is Christianity?* is an English translation of sixteen lectures delivered by him in the University of Berlin, 1899–1900. In this book, the effort to prove that the Gospels though unhistorical are yet historical, that Christianity though untrue is yet true, is strongly in evidence to any impartial reader. Take his remark on the "Miraculous Element" in Lecture II.; we find the same kind of specious argument on which I have already animadverted in the chapter on Miracles. He says: "Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and the inexplicable there is no lack—that the earth in its course stood still, that a

she-ass spoke, that a *storm was quieted by a word*,[1] we do not believe, and we shall never again believe; but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard, will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion." Why? Because, after all, these may have been accomplished by the operation of a natural law with which we are as yet unacquainted.[2] He gives the whole situation away, however, by making *excuses for the Evangelists*, because "*we know that the Gospels come from a time in which the marvellous may be said to have been something of almost daily occurrence*," and because "*we now know that eminent persons have not to wait until they have been long dead, or even for several years, to have miracles reported of them; they are reported at once, often the very next day.*" Again, speaking of the first three Gospels, he says: "These Gospels are not, it is true, historical works any more than the fourth; *they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they were books composed for the work of evangelisation.*" Such reasoning only serves to confirm one's suspicions. Here is the unedifying spectacle of an erudite scholar using his intellectual powers to make out a case for a Faith built upon foundations which he has himself destroyed. We do not wish to be told that there is a substratum of truth in the Gospel narratives. The ordinary man feels strongly that the whole should be true if it be God's Word. That this

[1] The italics in these quotations from Dr. Harnack are mine.

[2] "Although the order of Nature be inviolable, we are not yet by any means acquainted with all the forces working in it and acting reciprocally with other forces. Our acquaintance even with the forces inherent in matter, and with the field of their action, is incomplete; while of psychic forces we know very much less" (*What is Christianity?* p. 28).

is, and always will be, the common-sense view of mankind is proved by the fact that it is held by the vast majority of the strictly orthodox, as well as by every Agnostic and every cultured heathen.

M. Loisy writes in much the same strain as Dr. Harnack, and finds adherents in both English and Roman Catholic Churches, as may be seen from the correspondence in the *Church Times* during April, 1904.

In the January issue of the *Hibbert Journal* (1905) an Oxfordshire rector, the Rev. C. J. Shebbeare, presents the same aspect of liberal theology by means of various illustrations. He remarks: "It is evident that the lesson taught by our new teachers must have an important bearing upon popular religious conceptions and upon religious practice. *Its chief effect will be to deliver us from the error of identifying religion with belief in the supernatural—an error of which it is not difficult to see the pernicious consequences*" (italics are mine). This is all very well for those who can divest the Christian religion of its supernatural element, and yet remain honest believers. To my mind, this is simply non-Christian Theism, and the Theistic Church, Swallow Street, would be the proper place for such persons to perform their worship.

I crave the reader's patience while I give one more example of advanced apologetics. The Rev. Arthur Moorhouse, M.A., B.D., Tutor in Old Testament Languages and Literature at Didsbury College, offers, in a lecture[1] delivered at Manchester on "The Inspiration of the Old Testament," "an unhesitating and emphatic denial" to the statement that there is

[1] Fully reported in the *Methodist Times*.

any "*un*truth in the Old Testament." Yet he tells us that "the early chapters of Genesis are not historical in our modern and scientific sense," and asks us to remember that, "in the nature of things, it could not be history, for it deals with facts which are, of necessity, prehistoric"! Such pitiful shifts and evasions seem to many of us wholly unworthy of earnest men. "Our fathers," says Mr. Moorhouse, "may have thought that this was history miraculously dictated, but the Bible does not say so." No, and the Bible does not say that it is speaking the truth; but "our fathers" were simple-minded enough to forget that such a guarantee was necessary on the part of a book which they, like Mr. Moorhouse, believed to be the inspired Word of God.

§ 4. *Admissions by Orthodox Apologists.*

I cannot conclude this review of Bible criticism without an allusion to the opinions of those theologians who agree with the "Higher Critics" to an extent far exceeding anything the pious layman suspects. I shall omit, as being too advanced, the views of Dr. Driver,[1] given in his "Genesis," or of Canon Henson, as expressed in the *Contemporary Review* and in his book, *The Value of the Bible and*

[1] This learned divine—Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford—considers the first eleven chapters of Genesis to contain "no account of the real beginnings either of the earth itself, or of man and human civilisation upon it, but to represent merely what was currently believed among the Hebrews." The objections drawn from geology and anthropology are arrayed at great length, and the conclusions arrived at may be summed up as follows: The first appearance of man, the diffusion of mankind over the earth, the gradual growth of racial distinctions, far from being determinable in years B.C., must have extended over many millennia before 6–5,000 B.C. [It is now generally admitted that man goes back at least 200,000 years.]

Other Sermons, or of Archdeacon Wilson, shown in his various interesting books and pamphlets; and will confine myself to comparatively conservative theology. I select, as representative of this type, *The Divine Library of the Old Testament*, by Dr. A. F. Kirkpatrick (Master of Selwyn College, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, and Canon of Ely Cathedral), and *The Study of the Gospels*, being a "Handbook for the Clergy," by Dr. J. Armitage Robinson (Dean of Westminster).

In the preface of the former we read: "The lectures do not attempt to deal with many of the graver questions which are being raised as to the Old Testament." But it is just the more difficult questions, such as those examined with such destructive effect by the Higher Criticism, which specially require to be answered. Why are they neglected? The author goes on to confess that "the books were constructed out of earlier narratives; some were formed by the union of previous collections of poetry or prophecies; *some betray marks of a reviser's hand* [italics are mine]; and even books which bear the names of well-known authors in some cases contain matter which must be attributed to other writers." Also we find the following significant admissions. Referring to the important last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, he accepts Dr. Driver's criticisms, and says: "I do not see how we can resist the conclusion that these chapters were not written by Isaiah, but by an unknown prophet towards the close of the Babylonian Exile"; and he owns that "it will inevitably seem to many students of the Bible that, in assigning the prophecy to a date so near to the events which it foretells, we are detracting from its truly predictive

character and diminishing its value." However, he considers that "Isaiah is great enough to share his glory with this disciple, in whom, being dead, he yet spoke; and, paradox as it may seem, the truly *prophetic* character of the work gains by being referred to the time of the Exile." By what process of reasoning he arrives at this astonishing conclusion it is exceedingly difficult to comprehend.

Further admissions by Dr. Kirkpatrick must be noticed more briefly. They are: "The Psalms, like the Proverbs, have a long literary history." "They are poems by different authors, and David *may* be one of them." "Modern criticism claims, and claims with justice, that the Hexateuch, like so many of the other books, is composite in its origin, and has a long literary history." "That the Pentateuch was entirely written by Moses is merely a Jewish tradition, which passed into the Christian Church and was commonly accepted until modern times." [Yet how much hangs upon the trustworthiness of this same Jewish tradition, and how much else may not the Church have wrongfully accepted?] "The oldest Hebrew MS. in existence of which the date is known was written in 916 A.D.—*i.e.*, separated by more than a thousand years from the latest of the works included in the Canon." "The first chapter of Genesis is not, as we now know, a scientifically exact account of Creation"; "the account of the Fall is, it may be, an allegory rather than a history in the strict sense of the term"; "the Deluge was not universal in the sense that the waters covered the whole surface of the entire globe."

Finally, the following crucial questions are offered (pp. 88–9) *and left unanswered:* "In what sense, it is asked, can this legislation, which is now said to be

Mosaic in elemental germ and idea only, and to represent not the inspired deliverance of a supremely great individual, but the painful efforts of many generations of law-makers; these histories which have been compiled from primitive traditions, and chronicles, and annals, and what not; these books of prophecy which are not the authentic autographs of the prophets, but posthumous collections of such writings (if any) as they left behind them, eked out by the recollections of their disciples; these Proverbs and Psalms which have been handed down by tradition and altered and edited and re-edited; these histories which contain errors of date and fact, and have been, perhaps, 'idealised' by the reflection of the circumstances and ideas of the writer's own times upon a distant past; these seeming narratives which may be allegories; and these would-be prophecies which may be histories; in what sense can these be said to be *inspired?* The problems raised are grave." My own thoughts, and the thoughts of many like myself, are here candidly expressed. I have nothing to add, and can only echo this learned divine's solemn words—the problems raised are grave!

Turning now to the *Study of the Gospels*, we learn from Dr. Robinson as follows: There is no proof that St. Matthew is the author of the first Gospel. He is unable to fix the date himself, but quotes Dr. Harnack, who says "probably 70–75," and who also adds the important reservation, "except certain later additions." St. Mark's authorship, he thinks, is practically certain, and the year 65 is the probable date. "It is," he says, "exceedingly probable that St. Peter would not write or preach, even if he could speak at all, in any language but his mother tongue,

the Aramaic of Galilee, a local dialect akin to Hebrew. When he wrote or preached to Greek-speaking people, he would use Mark or some other disciple as his interpreter." What, then, may I ask, had become of the "gifts at Pentecost"?[1]

St. Luke is, according to Dr. Robinson, the fellow-traveller of St. Paul, and the date of his Gospel shortly after 70. Regarding St. John, we are informed that Dr. Harnack fixes the date between 80 and 110, and thinks that it was written by another person of the same name—John the presbyter, or elder, of Ephesus. Dr. Robinson, however, in a chapter he devotes to the subject of the fourth Gospel, attempts to show its apostolic authorship.

Dr. Robinson admits that the authorship of all four Gospels is doubtful, but thinks that, regarding the second Gospel, we may accept the second-century tradition that it was written by St. Mark, and that St. Mark was the "interpreter" of St. Peter and wrote the Gospel in Rome from information derived from that Apostle. Very good; let us accept this

[1] The barrenness of these gifts was first brought home to me when I noticed how orthodox Christian writers on the subject of the authorship, etc., of the Gospels assumed, as a matter of course, the natural intellectual limitations of the evangelists. Putting this difficulty before a cultured cleric, I was informed by him that what probably occurred, when "every man heard them speak in his own language," was that the multitude *thought* they heard, and so did really understand, much as people at the back of a large audience cannot exactly hear the speaker, but often understand him fairly correctly! This interpretation implies that everyone made fairly correct guesses, or else that there was a sort of telepathic communication; in any case, the miraculous element disappears. But the Bible words do not permit of such an interpretation, for they inform us: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Church does well to be tolerant towards the doubter, if this is the only kind of answer she is able to give him for the removal of his doubts.

conclusion. We have it, then, that *one* of the Gospels is from the mouth of an eye-witness. This eye-witness, however, was, after all, an eye-witness of only one year (or, according to conservative criticism, three years) of Christ's life; he was an illiterate person, and the information he imparted after thirty or forty years had to be written down by another person in another language, and there is no telling how faithful or unfaithful the translation may have been. Besides, as Dr. Robinson points out in his chapters on "The Great Sermon" and "The Non-Marcan Document," there are very important omissions in St. Mark. Referring to a supposed source for the information furnished by other evangelists, but omitted by St. Mark, he says: "You may gain some general idea of the scope of this document (the Non-Marcan[1]) by underlining in St. Luke's Gospel all those portions which are to be found in St. Matthew, but are not to be found in St. Mark." Now, what are these omissions in St. Mark? Are they trivial? Let us judge for ourselves by taking a few selections. There is no mention whatever of the story of Christ's miraculous birth, nor of the other incidents of His childhood which are said to be in fulfilment of prophecy, and there is no mention of the great Sermon on the Mount. The story of the Resurrection is told in a few sentences, and the Ascension in one sentence. Unfortunately, too, these very sentences are admittedly

[1] A Greek document which is supposed to have existed and then to have been entirely lost (imagine God's Word *lost!*), and to contain some of the matter related by St. Matthew and St. Luke, while omitted by St. Mark. *N.B.*—While the evangelist St. Mark is relegated to the position of a translator only, St. Matthew and St. Luke are taken by orthodox theologians to be mere copyists of St. Mark and a "lost" document!

interpolations, and St. Mark really ends at xvi. 8.[1] So there is no account of either the Incarnation,[2] Resurrection, or Ascension, and we are left with oral traditions, "lost" documents, and unknown copyists, as the only source from which to obtain any detailed information concerning the very groundwork of our Creed! Could anything be more unsatisfactory, more calculated to arouse suspicion of the "Christian Verities"—the Gospel truths? I am completely at a loss to understand how the Bishop of Gloucester[3] can say that the "Higher Criticism" has been a "gain to the Church," or the Bishop of London[3] that "the New Testament stands ten times as strong as it did fifty years ago." It would seem to be a case of "where ignorance is bliss," etc., or else of the wish being father to the thought.

There is much more that I should wish to call attention to, did space permit; but I have now, I think, given some insight into modern Bible criticism, and the extent to which it is accepted by Christians. It only remains, in conclusion, to ask for earnest thought on this new aspect of "the Word of God." In doing so, the following additional considerations may be borne in mind.

[1] See art. "Gospels," in the *Enc. Bib.*, and Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. Whether Dr. Robinson concedes this point in Bible criticism I am not aware; but, even if these passages were not interpolations, their meagreness is deplorable when we consider that they contain those astounding (to this generation at least) statements upon which the Christian Faith is founded.

[2] Biblical experts declare that the Virgin Birth "belongs to the latest strata of the New Testament tradition," and that no trace of the story can be found before 120 A.D.—in other words, that it is an obvious interpolation in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

[3] In his address at the Church Congress lately held at Weymouth.

§ 5. *Some Remaining Difficulties.*

WE MUST ACCEPT THE WHOLE OR REJECT THE WHOLE.

The orthodox and traditional view of the Old Testament is preserved in the unrepealed "Blasphemy Law," 9 and 10, William III., cap. 32, which enacts that any person who shall deny the "Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament" to be of "divine authority" shall be incapable of holding any public office or employment, and shall, on a second conviction, also suffer imprisonment for a space of three years. The Vatican Council of 1870, "speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost," declared that the books of the Old and New Testament "have God for their author, and, as such, have been delivered to the Church." The Council, therefore, ordained that the man should be anathema who refused "to receive, for sacred and canonical, the books of the Holy Scripture in their integrity, with all their parts." Listen, again, to the words of a well-known divine of our own Church, spoken but yesterday: "The whole of the teaching of the New Testament was based upon the supposition that God made a covenant with Abraham."[1] "You have our Lord Jesus Christ building His whole life on the Scriptures, and submitting to death in obedience to them."[2] This is the strictly orthodox opinion, and it is consistent with Christian doctrine. Yet, for obvious reasons, the Old Testament is now regarded as an incubus by an increasing number of earnest Christians.

[1] The Dean of Canterbury, speaking on the Bishop of Winchester's paper at the Church Congress, 1903.

[2] The Dean of Canterbury, speaking in St. Mary Bredin's Church, Canterbury, December 4th, 1904.

If historical inaccuracy and an admixture of legend are incompatible with inspiration in the Old Testament, they are equally so in the New Testament. Among the many suspected interpolations in the New Testament are the words attributed to Christ: "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). On this and other grounds the dogma of eternal torment is disputed on all sides, and the Athanasian Creed will soon, perhaps, no longer be forced upon us. In this instance, at any rate, criticism appears to have had a benign result. But mark[1] the words of the late Bishop of Manchester: "The very foundation of our Faith, the very basis of our hopes, are taken from us when one line of that sacred volume, on which we base everything, is declared to be untruthful and untrustworthy." "We must accept the whole of the inspired autographs or reject the whole."[2]

SILENCE OF HISTORIANS.

That the Bible should be open to criticism at all seems to me inconceivable if it really be *God's* gift to mankind. How could God, having determined after æons of time to make a definite revelation of Himself to His human creatures, permit the account of this revelation to be handed down in such a haphazard fashion that future generations cannot be sure that they possess a reliable record? This, too, when a trustworthy record was the more essential on account of the miraculous nature of the narrative. Not a

[1] Mark, too, the sublime selfishness of the chosen few. Rather than lose their own hopes, the doctrine of eternal torture for the many is to be retained.

[2] Quoted from a sermon by the Rev. E. Garbett, preached at Oxford.

single passage can be produced from the writings of the great historians and philosophers who flourished between A.D. 40 and A.D. 140 which makes the slightest allusion to the astounding phenomena connected with the birth, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth.

It was at one time claimed that Josephus spoke of Jesus. That this has been given up by theologians may be verified by a reference to Canon Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 63, where we read that "The single passage in which he (Josephus) alludes to Him is interpolated, if not wholly spurious." There is also a disputed passage[1] in Tacitus, where he

[1] The sceptical theory is that, had it been genuine, the passage would not have been overlooked by all the early Christian writers in the various disputations with objectors, and especially by Tertullian, who quoted largely from his works, and the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, who was zealous in his defence of the Faith and greedy of materials with which to support it. (An important French student of Tacitus holds that the whole *Annals* is medieval!) On the other hand, the style is thoroughly Tacitean, containing a number of words and expressions elsewhere used by the author, and more or less characteristic of him, yet without any such elaborate over-imitation as we should expect to find even in a skilful forgery. Nor is the subject-matter perhaps less characteristic, while the MS. evidence is in favour of the passage being genuine. Taking it to be so, what, after all, does it amount to? Merely this. Christ was put to death by Pontius Pilate, and a very large number of Christians were put to death in a horrible manner by Nero. The passage occurs in Tacitus, *Annals*, XV., 44, and runs as follows: "Consequently, to get rid of the accusation, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called by the populace 'Christians.' Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred of mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and

speaks of Christians having "their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate." And that is all! Could anything be more disappointing than this must be to thoughtful Christians who wish to establish the historical accuracy of the miraculous story of God's life on earth? Eusebius (A.D. 315–340), the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, is apparently reduced to appealing to a Pagan oracle for a proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for he says to the heathen: "But thou at least listen to thine own gods, to thy oracular deities themselves, who have borne witness, and ascribed to our Saviour (Jesus Christ) not imposture, but piety and wisdom, and ascent into heaven."

The silence of secular historians is accounted for, by certain divines, by falling back on a theory of hostility or contempt. Thus Dean Farrar thinks that Josephus's silence on the subject of Jesus and Christianity was as deliberate as it was dishonest (see his *Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 63). Except that this offers a much-needed explanation, I am not cognisant of any reason for suspecting the famous *secular* historian; although, of course, the untrustworthiness of the *Christian* historians is notorious. Eusebius, for example, the gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, confesses, with commendable frankness: "We have decided to relate nothing concerning them [the early Christians] except the things in which we can vindicate the divine judgment."[1]

perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle."

[1] See Bk. VIII., chap. ii., par. 2, on p. 324, vol. i. *Eusebius*

With regard to the prodigy of the darkness, etc., that occurred at the death of Jesus, Gibbon informs us as follows: "It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. But the one and the other has omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe."[1] Any attempt to explain this away by supposing that the darkness of three hours was local only detracts from the magnitude of the miracle, which was intended, by its very magnitude, to be one of the proofs of the death of a God.

THOUGHTS ON "TRADITION" AS GOD'S METHOD FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF TRUTH TO POSTERITY.

Have you ever, in the days of your early youth, played the game of "gossip"? It is an amusing game, and also points a moral. A number of persons put themselves in a long row, and the first will think of some little incident, which he will carefully whisper to his neighbour, who will then pass it on, and so on, and so on, till it reaches the last person, who will then repeat out loud the story he has heard. The original story will then be divulged, and much

(Oxford: Parker & Co.). His candour here is deserving of all praise; but his methods can hardly be termed scientific; while an impartial perusal of his *Vita Constantini*, a panegyric on the Emperor Constantine, should be enough to shake the confidence of all but the blindest of his admirers.

[1] See p. 179, chap. xv., of Gibbon's *Rome* (Oddy, 1809.)

amusement is caused by the differences that are found between the two stories. This illustration of what occurs in "gossip" came back to my mind with much misgiving when I first heard how the story of my Saviour's life on earth was handed down for a long period "by tradition." Apparently, Christian theologians look quite complacently, and without any misgiving, upon this process for the transmission of the Christian verities; but, for myself, whether it were a century, or whether it were only a matter of thirty or forty years, before the final committal to writing, it was a heartrending discovery, and all my confidence in the truth of the Bible story was shaken. My dismay was not diminished when I learnt also that it was extremely doubtful whether the authors were eye-witnesses of the events, or especially inspired[1] by God for their task; also, that there had been subsequent interpolations by equally unknown and uninspired writers, who, to speak plainly, were nothing more nor less than forgers, actuated, possibly, by pious motives.

We find ourselves asking the questions, "Did not God know that a time would come when we should discover that nature's laws were not of the fragile or elastic character which our forefathers had supposed? Did He not know that we should therefore require absolute proof before we could believe that they had been broken in a bygone and credulous age?" Instead of this, the only proofs afforded us are copies of

[1] That the writers had minds especially inspired, or were vouchsafed any unusual facilities, is discredited by the remarks of the apologists themselves. For instance, Dr. Robinson, in his book already referred to, alludes to St. Peter's illiteracy, St. Mark's poor literary attainments, and the limitations to which all the evangelists in ancient times were subjected.

documents concocted from hearsay—we are not sure when or by whom—and from time to time fraudulently manipulated by interested though "pious" forgers. Did He, in His Omniscience, purposely allow events to take their course, and intend the story of His Son's life upon earth to be handed down to us by the same unsatisfactory process as that of many another ancient tradition now known to be historically worthless? If ever special intervention with the course of nature were necessary, surely it would be here. A miracle to prove the miracle on which our hopes are staked. Or, if this be asking too much, if it be argued that it is no longer God's pleasure to break the laws which He has made, and that He now accomplishes His purposes by means of these laws only, how comes it that, for the safeguarding of this great truth, the most ordinary precautions have been neglected? We are often asked to consider the yearnings of man as a proof that the thing yearned for is a reality. His yearnings, therefore, are not a negligible quantity. Do not, then, the yearnings of millions of Christians in the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches for miraculous proofs of God's residence once upon earth count for something? Are not all the "miraculous" relics and "wonder-working" ikons a proof that man feels that God's revelation ought to be assured to us by the continuance of miracles? In our own Church, Holman Hunt's painting of "The Light of the World" is being sent round our colonies, to strengthen people's belief in Jesus Christ. Why, oh why, have we not the real picture of our Saviour, bringing our God nearer to us, and enabling us to focus our thoughts on Him? I once mentioned my feeling on this subject to a clergyman, a doctor of divinity, well versed

in Church history. He replied by suggesting that there was a tradition which indicated that the true likeness of our Lord *had* been miraculously transmitted, and that from this the great Italian painters had caught their inspiration.[1]

THE ALLEGED SINLESSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

It may be urged that we have, what is of far more importance, the picture of His character. Have we? The absolute sinlessness of Christ is one of the chief proofs held out to us of His divinity. It is described as being in itself a miracle so great that it furnishes us with sufficient grounds for belief in other miracles. Many pious and learned theists feel that the character of Christ as portrayed in the Gospels betrays imperfections. But let this pass. What do we know of His life? Let us assume that in the Gospel of St. Mark we are put in possession of the impressions of an eye-witness. St. Peter's personal knowledge of the *private* life of Jesus was confined to his recollections concerning a beloved Master during the period of His *public* ministry. And that ministry extended over one, or at most three, years. Have not the disciples of great teachers in the past invariably extolled the perfections of their masters? Have they ever dwelt upon their imperfections? Has not the picture handed down by tradition, and afterwards committed to writing, often been that of a perfect man? That the writers

[1] I presume he referred to the legend of Saint Veronica. It seems hardly necessary to have recourse to the supernatural in order to account for the artistic inspiration, when there were natural sources available in the shape of representations of pagan gods. Thus Mercury, attired as a shepherd, with a lamb upon his shoulders, was no infrequent object in ancient art, and this has, in some cases, led to a difficulty in distinguishing between Mercury and Jesus Christ.

of the Gospels recognised the need for Christ to appear sinless, and adopted questionable methods for their purpose, is only too evident. Dr. Robinson explains[1] the disappearance from the other Gospels of St. Mark's references to "perplexity," "amazement," "fear," "anger," "hardness of heart," etc., as being "the result of a kind of reverence which belonged to a slightly later stage of reflection, when certain traits might even seem derogatory to the dignity of the sacred character." Comment is superfluous.

THE IGNORANCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

There is another difficulty of belief in the divinity of Christ, which it is all the more essential to bring into prominence because it usually receives but scant notice from the pulpit. I refer to the "ignorance" of Jesus Christ. In a review of *Le Réalisme Chrétien et l'Idéalisme Grec*, par L. Laberthonnière, the *Church Times* praises the Abbé's conception of Christian realism, and then goes on to say: "Here is found the key to the mystery of the ignorance of Jesus Christ, and of the other limitations attributed to Him in the Gospels. There are two untenable theories—the one that He deliberately kept things back from His disciples; the other that He was Himself ignorant of His own true nature, which afterwards became known to the Church. The truth is that He had to reveal Himself by living among men, and not by giving them an abstract doctrine about Himself—a doctrine which must have been either inadequate because adjusted to their comprehension, or else

[1] In note A, pp. 42–3, of his book, *The Study of the Gospels*.

incomprehensible because adjusted to a reality which was beyond them." The plain question, however, is —Had He, or had He not, the attribute of Omniscience? Did He, or did He not, know what we now know? Was He God or was He man? The usual answer of the cleric—the only answer possible in face of the utterances attributed to Him—is that, as Very Man, He had only the knowledge of His age (or, should we not say, of the very restricted environment selected by Himself for His activities upon earth?); but that as Very God he performed miracles, taught spiritually, as never man taught, and was sinless.

Surely an Omniscient God must have known that grave doubts would arise in the future from the real or apparent ignorance of His Son, and, *vice versâ*, that any prescience shown by Him would be hailed with delight as a proof of His divinity. If it be urged that such trials of faith are useful, why should it be the thoughtful of future generations who are chiefly to be so tried? If Christ had chosen His disciples from among the "wise men of the East" (or West), instead of from among men of the lowest order of intelligence and education, there would then have been no necessity for the doctrine to "have been either inadequate because adjusted to their comprehension, or else incomprehensible because adjusted to a reality which was beyond them." Only a very small and remote corner of the world was favoured by the presence of God when revealing Himself in human form for the benefit of mankind. Only the most ignorant, for the most part, heard his personal teaching. Had He revealed Himself to all, or to a far greater number of persons then living, and satisfied

the ardent longings of the wise men and philosophers[1] of those times, would this not have conduced to the rapid recognition of Christianity and to its firm establishment over the whole world for all ages?

Apologists do not explain at all convincingly why the Almighty could not, or preferred not, to make Himself understood. If He could say "Let there be light," He could also have said "Let there be knowledge." Besides, after all, what is there in the broad facts of modern science which could not be explained to an intelligent savage to-day? The shape and movements of the earth are explained in the most elementary geography books, and the theory of Evolution can be made quite clear to comparative children (I speak from personal experience).[2] Recent discoveries have revealed to us that ancient nations must have reached an extraordinarily high state of civilisation. Six thousand years ago, in the valley of the Nile, there existed a standard of civilisation incomparably higher than that of the Jews at the time when God is alleged to have selected them as His chosen people. "The Old Testament," says Canon C. H. Robinson, "is the history of a people insignificant in number, occupying a country about the same size as the county of Yorkshire; remarkable neither for their superior learning, civilisation, nor military power; remarkable, if for anything, for their obstinate,

[1] Philo, for instance, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, was a contemporary of Christ. Speaking of him in art. "Alexandria" of his *Dictionary of the Bible*, Dr. Smith says: "It is impossible not to feel the important office which the mystic philosophy, of which Philo is the representative, fulfilled, in preparing for the apprehension of the highest Christian truth."

[2] One of my younger ones, aged five years, is certainly a trifle mixed on the subject; for he said to me lately: "Daddy! it was lucky, wasn't it, that men didn't catch us all when we were fishes?"

grasping, usurious character; who, nevertheless, were chosen out of all the nations of the ancient world to be the recipients of peculiar blessings and favours."[1] This incomprehensible selection of ignorant Jews to be the special recipients of Revelation only emphasises the contention that we have no right to assume that learned men of two thousand years ago could not have understood plain facts, or that it was necessary for them to believe in purely imaginary explanations of the cosmos, in a flat, stationary earth, in a blue-basin sky, in an "Adam and Eve" origin, in devil-possession, in absurd miracles, etc. Their ignorance, which was natural enough considering their opportunities, could easily have been dispelled when God graciously condescended to come and live among them. What a proof would that not have been of His Divinity!

In any case, we are to understand that the Apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost, so that they might be able to work miracles and be witnesses unto Christ, even to the utmost parts of the earth. Surely, then, they could, and ought to, have been enlightened for their mission work up to the level, say, of some of our twentieth-century theologians? The miracle of an intelligence and knowledge equal to that of the average modern apologist is not, after all, so very inconceivable, and it would, at least, have been more useful than miracle-working in a miracle-believing age. Christians, who glibly admit that Jesus had only the knowledge of His age, cannot, I think, fully realise the force of such an admission. One reason for this may be that their own knowledge is not

[1] The quotation is from Canon C. H. Robinson's book, *Studies in the Character of Christ.*

completely up to date. That Jesus had no knowledge of nature's inviolable laws; that the grosser forms of superstition die out so soon as these laws are recognised; that Jesus accepted the Scriptures as literally true, and not in the sense now attributed to them by the Higher Critics—of all this they may be dimly conscious; but what have still to be studied by them are the startling disclosures of Comparative Mythology, and of the now fully-established theory of Evolution, and their bearing upon the Christian Faith. The matter is one of the utmost importance, as will be seen by a perusal of the following chapters.

COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY

Chapter IV.

THE GRAVE SUSPICIONS AROUSED BY THE STUDY OF ANCIENT BELIEFS

§ 1. *The New Theological Theory of a Progressive Revelation.*

The facts and truths established by Science are no longer made the subject of attacks by Christian apologists in the manner that they used to be; they are now considered by them to be the unfolding, through God's Providence, of pieces of information hitherto concealed from us. A scientific discovery (by men who are more often than not Agnostics) simply means that God wills to reveal another detail of His eternal methods. There must be, we are told, a frank modification, or even the abandonment, of certain preconceived ideas which, faulty as they were, had sufficed for man in an earlier stage of his development, and had come to be regarded as integral parts of his religious faith. This is the substance of the modern apologist's argument which is intended to reconcile all outlying discrepancies between our new knowledge and our old beliefs. The new explanation, based upon the assumption that revelation is progressive, will come as a surprise to the rank and file of Christendom, who have hitherto been given to understand that the Bible contained the one, only, and sufficient revelation of God to man. However,

there is no alternative. If accepted, many grave difficulties of faith are swept away. Nay, more; the reasonableness of our faith is immensely strengthened, and the facts of science and research become a valuable adjunct to the armour of the Christian apologist. On the other hand, a refusal to accept spells disaster to the Christian faith. The truth of progressive revelation is, therefore, a matter of life or death for the Christian religion; and, of all branches of modern research, it is Comparative Mythology which absolutely demands the complete establishment of this theory. If true, our belief is further verified by the startling discoveries of the ethnologist; if untrue, it is irrevocably shattered. Accordingly, in this chapter I am giving a prominent place to the discussion of this theory. I think I may safely say that there is no department of knowledge about which so little is known by the ordinary man, and even, I regret to say, by the majority of ecclesiastics,[1] as Comparative Mythology. Yet it is the study of this science perhaps more than of any other which is causing well-informed men to lose faith in Christianity. Ask Christian professors in our universities who are in touch with the thought around them, and you will

[1] Some years ago there were ecclesiastics who took a lively interest in Comparative Mythology. "Students of Pagan religions as well as Christian missionaries were bent on discovering more striking and more startling coincidences, in order to use them in confirmation of their favourite theory that some rays of a primeval revelation, or some reflection of the Jewish religion, had reached the uttermost ends of the world." Subsequently Comparative Mythology seems to have lost much of its charm. Why? "The opinion that the Pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempts to explain Greek and Latin as the corruptions of Hebrew" (Professor Max Müller, in *The Science of Religion*, p. 40).

hear that their sceptical friends are all telling them the same thing; they cannot get over ethnology, and especially that branch of it which concerns itself with Comparative Mythology. Recent ethnological research has thrown an entirely new light upon old problems. The discoveries of science, including the animal origin of man, may, by a stretch of imagination and faith, be reconciled with belief; so also the disclosures of the Higher Criticism; but the very origin of Christianity is exposed by the study of Comparative Mythology.

It will be as well, in the first place, to see exactly what the Church herself says on the matter; how far she recognises that gigantic strides have been made in a study formerly pursued in a manner necessarily elementary by the Alexandrian schools; how far she concedes the conclusions of the modern ethnologist; and how far she approves of progressive revelation as the explanation for the whole enigma of the parallels between ancient beliefs and our own. For this purpose I think I cannot do better than quote from two excellent articles on the subject in the *Church Times*. They were contributed by the editor of *The Treasury* magazine. "The study," he says, "of folk-lore, of anthropology, of primitive myth and ritual, has made enormous strides within the last quarter of a century, and the fruits of that study are now forced, *for the first time*,[1] upon the attention of the general public. Presented in outline, the situation is as follows: We have been accustomed to consider Christianity apart from all other religions.

[1] The italics are mine throughout this quotation; also words within brackets [ ].

We have recognised, indeed, the historical preparation for it so far as that is described in the pages of the Old Testament; but we have thought of that preparation as conducted among a single people, and by means of a unique revelation. *Of pagan religions we have known practically nothing.* The mythology of the Greeks and Romans, which some of us had to learn at school, seemed to be a collection of pointless fairy tales. And as regards other and more primitive races, both ancient and modern, the statement that 'the heathen, in his blindness, bows down to wood and stone' comprised accurately the sum of our knowledge. That there could be any but the vaguest likeness between them and our own beliefs was unimaginable. Possibly there was a belief in the Fatherhood of some supreme being, some vague conception of a future life, while sacrificial rites, as we knew, were not peculiar to the Jews. But the other doctrines of our Creed we regarded as exclusively our own. *The ideas of a Triune God-head, of an Incarnate Saviour, of the Virgin Birth, of the Second Advent, of the Sacraments, of the Communion of Saints*—these seemed to be the distinctive possessions of Christianity; these were marks clearly dividing it from any form of paganism. So, at least, we imagined. [Had we not every reason thus to imagine on the authority of Holy Scripture?] But it proves that *we were completely mistaken. The modern study of primitive religion shows that every one of these beliefs is, or has been, held in some part or other of the pagan world quite independently of Christian influence,* and that, while we are bound to speak of these beliefs as, in a sense, distinctly Christian, *to term them exclusively Christian is no longer possible*.....In these early mythologies we can

discern the longing for a personal God, capable of direct communication with man, and for some sort of union between the divine and human natures. Whence did these instincts themselves originate? *The one tenable reply seems to be that they were God-implanted*.....The Zoroastrian anticipates the advent of a 'Saviour' (Saoshyas), who will end the strife between good and evil, personified as Ormuzd and Ahriman, by sweeping away evil from the earth. In the ancient Vedic and Scandinavian religions, in the Old-World creeds of Egypt and Babylon, in the legends of Mexico and Polynesia, is found, in a variety of guises, the same fundamental idea. Always there is a sense of a supremely righteous Power; of a world tainted with evil, and out of harmony with the Power above it; of the coming of some Deliverer, who will establish a kingdom of righteousness. Once more, in many mythologies the idea of a Virgin Birth is associated with that of a Divine Incarnation. Men felt instinctively that the entrance of a Divine Being into the human race must take place in a miraculous way. And thus the Spirit of God, working by means of what we may term the instinctive feelings of mankind, prepared the human race throughout the world for the coming of the Son of God, to be born of a pure Virgin, to take our nature upon Him for evermore, and to redeem us from the power of sin.....We find conceptions, such as that of the Hindu *Trimurti*, which seem to resemble the doctrine of the Trinity. In the sacramental meals of totem-worship, when a sacred animal is killed, and partaken of by the worshippers in order that its power may be communicated to them [not to mention "sacred" *men* killed with the same idea], there seems a dim anticipation of

the highest Christian rite. Baptism as a cleansing and symbolical ceremony was known centuries before the Christian era.....These rites and beliefs, obscured by superstition and insufficient to satisfy the longing which brought them into existence, were designed to serve as the schoolmasters who would lead the heathen at length to Christ" (cp. Galatians iii. 24).

These remarks, by a clergyman of the Church of England, will enable the ordinary person, who for the most part knows nothing whatever about these things, to realise the immense importance of the questions raised by Comparative Mythology.

§ 2. *Parallels in Ancient Religions, and Some Remarks Upon Them.*

Before proceeding any further, it will be advisable to consider some concrete examples of the parallels[1]

[1] The parallels are widely scattered through numerous volumes, ancient and modern. In a book entitled *Bible Myths and their Parallels in Other Religions*, by T. W. Doane (New York: The Commonwealth Company, 28, Lafayette Place), they have been laboriously collected. A special feature of the book is the careful way in which authorities are invariably given for the statements advanced, and it has greatly assisted me in obtaining the array of remarkable parallels presented in this section. As to the conclusions arrived at by the author regarding the origins of Christianity, opinions will necessarily differ; but, so far as the parallels are concerned, the majority, including all the most important, are indisputable. The authorities consulted by the author in the case of Krishna and Buddha are:—

KRISHNA.

Monier Williams: *Hinduism.*
G. W. Cox: *The Myths of the Aryan Nations.*
Thomas Inman: *Ancient Faiths.*
Thomas Maurice: *Indian Antiquities.* Also *The History of Hindostan.*
Godfrey Higgins: *Anacalypsis.*
J. P. Lundy: *Monumental Christianity.*
D. O. Allen: *India, Ancient and Modern.*
Dupuis: *The Origin of Religious Worship.*
Joguth Chunder Gangooly: *Life and Religion of the Hindoos.*

between the beliefs and teachings of ancient religions and those of the Christian religion.

KRISHNA AND BUDDHA.

Krishna.—Krishna was born of a chaste virgin named Devaki. A chorus of angels exclaimed "In the delivery of this favoured woman nature shall have cause to exult." The birth was announced in the heavens by a star. On the morning of his birth the spirits of heaven danced and sang, and the clouds emitted low, pleasing sounds. Though royally descended, he was actually born in a cave. The

L. M. Child: *The Progress of Religious Ideas through Successive Ages.*
Samuel Johnson: *Oriental Religions.*
Asiatic Researches—or Transactions of the Society instituted in Bengal for inquiring into the History, Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia.
Bhagavat-Geeta. Translated from the original Sanscrit by Charles Wilkes.
Vishnu Purana. Translated from the original Sanscrit by H. H. Wilson.

BUDDHA.

The above mentioned *Hinduism*, *Anacalypsis*, *Progress of Religious Ideas*, *Origin of Religious Worship*, and—
L'Abbè Huc: *Christianity in China, Tartary, and Thibet.*
Ernest de Bunsen: *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians.*
Samuel Beal: *The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha from the Chinese Sanscrit* (being a translation of the Fo-pen-hing).
Viscount Amberley: *An Analysis of Religious Belief.*
R. Spence Hardy: *The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists Compared with History and Science.* Also by the same author, *Eastern Monachism*, and *A Manual of Buddhism.*
J. W. Rhys-Davids: *Buddhism.*
Max Müller: *A History of Ancient Sanscrit Literature.* Also by the same author, *Introduction to the Science of Religion.*

"Chapter and verse" for each and every statement will be found in Mr. Doane's book, chaps. xii. to xxix. The parallels are concisely given in chaps. xxviii. and xxix.

divine child was recognised and adored by cowherds. Krishna was presented with gifts of sandalwood and perfumes. The holy Indian prophet, Nared, paid him a visit, consulted the stars, and declared him to be of celestial descent. Krishna was born at a time when his foster father was warned by a heavenly voice to fly with the child, as the reigning monarch might take his life. The king ordered the massacre in all his States of all the male children born during the night of the birth of Krishna. One of the first miracles performed by Krishna, when mature, was the curing of a leper. A lame woman came with a vessel filled with spices and sweet oil, and cast it upon his head. Krishna was crucified,[1] and he is represented with arms extended hanging upon a cross. At his death a black circle surrounded the moon, and the sun was darkened at noonday. Spirits were to be seen on all sides. Krishna descended into hell, rose again from the dead, and ascended bodily into heaven, many persons witnessing his ascent. He is to come again on earth in the latter days. He will appear as an armed warrior riding a white horse. At his approach the sun and moon will be darkened, the earth will tremble, and the stars fall from the firmament (compare Rev. vi. 2, 12, 13). He is to judge the dead at the last day. Krishna is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and is the beginning, middle, and end of all things. Krishna was transfigured before his beloved disciple, Arjuna. Krishna was the meekest

[1] The Vishnu Purana speaks of his being shot in the foot with an arrow. Other accounts state that he was suspended on a tree. "On raconte fort diversement la mort de Crishna. Une tradition remarquable et avérée le fait périr sur un bois fatal (un arbre), ou il fut cloué d'un coup de flèche" (quoted from Mons. Guigniaut's *Religion de l'Antiquité*, by Higgins; *Anacalypsis*, vol. i., p. 144).

of beings. He preached sublimely. According to Professor Monier Williams, he was pure and chaste in reality; any amorousness related of him is to be explained allegorically, as symbolising the longing of the human soul for the Supreme; just as the amorous "Song of Solomon" is said to be allegorical, and to mean "Christ's love for his Church." Krishna even condescended to wash the feet of the Brahmins. He is the second person of the Hindoo Trinity. Krishna said: "Let him, if seeking God by deep abstraction, abandon his possessions and his hopes, betake himself to some secluded spot, and fix his heart and thoughts on God alone." And, again: "Then be not sorrowful; from all thy sins I will deliver thee." Many other such remarkable passages might be adduced from the Bhagavadgita.[1] Justice, humanity, good faith, compassion, disinterestedness—in fact, all the virtues—are said to have been taught by Krishna, both by precept and example; but we must remember, as Monier Williams informs us in his *Hinduism*, that Krishna, in the ancient epic poems, is simply a great hero, and it is not until about the fourth century B.C. that he is deified and declared to be an incarnation of Vishnu. In conclusion, the accounts of Krishna's childhood agree very closely with the apocryphal accounts of Christ's childhood.[2]

Buddha.—If the similarity between the histories of

[1] They are quoted by Monier Williams in his book, *Hinduism*. The author of the "Song of Bhagavat" is unknown. His poem was at an early date dignified by a place in the Mahabharata, but is of a much later date than the body of that epic.

[2] N.B.—The Archbishop of Canterbury has written a letter lately expressing himself in favour of a "systematic effort" to increase the public interest in the Apocrypha!

Krishna and Jesus is remarkable, what shall we say of that between the mythological[1] portions of the history of Gautama Buddha[2] and the history of Jesus? Looked upon as a confirmation of Progressive Revelation, it is nothing short of marvellous, whether we regard the similarity in events, characters, actions, or sayings. From Buddha's incarnation by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Maya, until his bodily ascension into the celestial regions, almost every important episode of the life of Christ appears to be paralleled. Attendant miraculous events, spotless character, wonderful doings, cherished sayings—all are here. Buddha was born of the Virgin Maya. The incarnation was brought about by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a white elephant. The birth was announced by the Messianic Star rising in the horizon. Celestial delight was manifest at his birth. The Devas sang: "To-day Bodhisatwa is born on earth, to give joy and peace to men and Devas." The marvellous infant was visited by wise men, who hailed him God of Gods. He was presented with costly jewels and precious substances. His life was threatened by the King Bimbasara, who was advised to destroy the child. When *twelve* years old the child Buddha is presented in the temple, where he both heard and asked learned questions. His

[1] "We are accustomed to find the legendary and the miraculous gathering, like a halo, around the early history of religious leaders, until the sober truth runs the risk of being altogether neglected for the glittering and edifying falsehood" (*Enc. Brit.*, vol. iv., art. "Buddhism," p. 424). This process is recognised as a universal rule. What grounds have we for assuming that Christianity is exempt from it?

[2] According to Buddhist belief, there have been many different Buddhas on earth. The Buddha whose life we are here studying is Siddhartha or Gautama, the Sakya Prince.

ancestry was traced from his father to Maha Sammata, the first monarch of the world. He was baptised, and at this water-baptism the Spirit of God was present. When about to adopt a religious life, he fasted for a long time, and was tempted by Mara, the author of Evil; but he heeded not the words of the Evil One, and said: "Get thee away from me." The heavens showed their appreciation of this defeat by raining flowers. Towards the end of his life he was transfigured when on a mountain in Ceylon called Pandava. He performed great miracles.[1] For instance, on one occasion he floated through the air across a river; and, on another, he caused a tempest to cease, and so saved his disciples, who were in imminent danger of shipwreck. When he died and was buried, the coverings of the body unrolled themselves, and the lid of his coffin was opened by supernatural powers. He ascended bodily to the celestial regions. He is to come upon the earth in the latter days to restore the world to order and happiness. He is to be judge of the dead. He is the Supreme Being, the Eternal One. He is represented as saying: "Let all the sins that are committed in the world fall upon me, that the world may be delivered"; and again: "Hide your good deeds, and confess before the world the sins you have committed"; and again: "Though the great world be swallowed up and pass away, yet be assured the words of Buddha are true"; and again: "Beware of fixing your eyes upon women." "A wise man should avoid married life, as if it were a burning pit of live coals." "One who is not able to live in a state of celibacy should not commit

[1] Eugène Burnouf, the celebrated French Orientalist, says: "By miracles and preaching was the religion of Buddha established."

adultery." According to Buddha, the motives of all our actions should be pity, or love for our neighbour. Those who became his disciples were told they must renounce the world, give up their riches, and take the vow of poverty.

It is difficult to separate fiction from fact; but authenticated records show that, together with a noble physique and superior natural endowments, Gautama Buddha attained to an exceptional purity of life and integrity of purpose. Probably he never arrogated to himself any higher authority than that of a teacher; but his followers, turning for consolation to the theory that he still lived, exalted him, within a quarter of a century of his death, to a place among their deities. He was very early regarded as omniscient and absolutely sinless. All sorts of legends, borrowed from current myths, attached themselves to the story of his life, while his teaching as a simple-hearted, truth-seeking philanthropist became encrusted with the superstitions and religious speculations that were current. As with Krishna, so here there are stories of Buddha's childhood, of which the apocryphal stories of Christ's childhood are an almost exact reproduction.

PARALLELS OTHER THAN KRISHNA AND BUDDHA.

In the case of Krishna and Buddha it is contended by some Christian writers that the stories must have been borrowed from Christian sources both canonical and apocryphal. This contention, founded on the lateness of the mythical stories in literary form, will be considered in due course; but first let us have clearly before our minds those parallels concerning which there is no such contention, for the simple

reason that there is no getting away from the fact that the beliefs existed long before the advent of Christ. In ancient religions, other than Hindooism and Buddhism, there are, among many others, distinct parallels to—the Virgin Birth; the Heavenly Choir; the Epiphany; the Slaughter of the Innocents; the Temptation and Forty Days' Fast; the Miracles; the Crucifixion, Darkness, and descent into Hell; the Resurrection and Ascension; the Second Coming and Day of Judgment.

The Virgin Birth.—In China,[1] the sages Fohi (3468 B.C. according to Chinese writers) and Lao-Kiun (about 600 B.C.) were born of virgins. In Persia, Zoroaster,[2] the founder of the Perso-Iranian national religion, was miraculously conceived. All attempts to connect him with Hebrew influences are groundless. In Egypt, Horus, who had the epithet of Saviour, was born of the virgin Isis. Egyptian monuments represent the infant saviour in the arms of his virgin mother, or sitting on her knee. The Egyptian Bible, remember, is the oldest in the world! In Grecian and Roman mythology the "Sons of Jove"—Hercules, Bacchus, Amphion, Perseus, Mercury, Æolus, Apollo, and others—have mortal mothers. Regarding this, the Christian Father, Justin Martyr, says: "It having reached the Devil's ears that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ, he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the

[1] Dean Milman, in his *History of Christianity*, remarks that the first Jesuit missionaries who went to China were appalled at finding in the mythology of that country a counterpart of the story of the Virgin of Judæa.

[2] Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, was probably a historical person. We are quite in the dark as to the precise date of Zoroaster. Duncker places him about the year 1000 B.C.

sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove." Even regarding Plato there was a legend that his mother, Perictione, had experienced a miraculous conception through the influences of the God Apollo, and that the God had declared to Aris, to whom she was betrothed, the parentage of the child (compare St. Matthew i. 20). This was believed in by the disciples of Plato centuries before the Christian era. Among northern nations the sons of Odin take the place of the sons of Jove. Thus "Baldur the Good," the Beneficent Saviour, was the son of Odin and Friga. The worship of Friga was continued until that of the Virgin Mary took its place. In Mexico, the "Saviour" Quetzalcoatl was born of a pure virgin, who was called the "Queen of Heaven." An ambassador from heaven announced to the virgin Sochiquetzal, mother of Quetzalcoatl, that it was the will of God that she should conceive a son without connection with man. Here we have an exact parallel to the annunciation of the Virgin Mary (St. Luke i. 26–35), in a part of the globe that was not discovered till nearly 1,500 years after the birth of Christ! Similar traditions of Saviours are found among various tribes of North and South America.

Regarding the tendency to believe in incarnations, Dr. Illingworth explains[1] that "a general tendency in the human mind to expect a thing cannot possibly be twisted into a presumption against its occurrence..... The fact of the expectation does not logically make invention a likelier alternative than occurrence,

[1] Pp. 78–9 of his important work, *Divine Immanence*.

except upon one hypothesis—namely, that the occurrence is impossible." This argument skims over—or, I might almost say, neglects—the real contention of the Rationalist. Let us assume that incarnation is not ruled out of court as being *à priori* impossible; the virgin-birth of Jesus was subsequently invented by the Christian Church because its eminent suitability necessitated its invention. Only thus could the Divinity of Jesus Christ be firmly established. More especially would this be the case in an age when everyone was familiar with the notion of virgin-born Saviours. The minds of men were deeply imbued with the idea of miraculous birth in the case of anyone claiming to be of divine origin. Only on this understanding would the heathen, already believing in their own virgin-born Saviours, have accepted Christianity.

The Heavenly Choir.—Even Confucius, the celebrated philosopher (born 551 B.C.), was ushered into the world with dragons and angels hovering about the couch, and with the sound of heavenly music in the air. At the birth of Osiris, the father of Horus, another Egyptian "Saviour," a voice was heard proclaiming that the "Ruler of all the earth is born." There was joy in Olympus when Apollo was born, and, at the time of the birth of Hercules, his father Zeus spake from heaven, and said: "This day shall a child be born of the race of Perseus, who shall be the mightiest of the sons of men."

The Epiphany.—At the birth of Confucius, Mithras (the Persian "Saviour" and "Mediator"), and Socrates (469 B.C.) there came wise men, and, in the case of the two latter, gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh were presented.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.—The story of the "dangerous child" is almost universal. Horus, Zoroaster, and Bacchus, for example, were "dangerous" children.

The Forty Days' Fast and the Temptation.—According to Pliny, Zoroaster lived for thirty years in the wilderness upon cheese. The Devil made Zoroaster magnificent promises; but the temptations were in vain. The ancient Persians had a religious festival, which they annually celebrated, called the "Salutation of Mithras (the sun-god)." And during it *forty days* were set apart for sacrifice and thanksgiving. Among the ancient Egyptians the priest submitted to abstinence of the most severe description. "The priests in Heliopolis," says Plutarch, "have many fasts, during which they meditate upon divine things." Fasting and self-denial were observances required of the Greeks, who desired initiation into the mysteries. The same practice was found among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians. The Mexicans had a *forty days'* fast, in memory of Quetzalcoatl, who was tempted and fasted *forty days* on a mountain. Lord Kingsborough says: "The temptation of Quetzalcoatl and the fast of forty days.....are very curious and mysterious."[1] Mr. Bonwick says: "The Spaniards were surprised to see the Mexicans keep the vernal forty days' fast."[2]

Turning to the Old Testament, we may remind

[1] *Mexican Antiquities*, vol. vi., pp. 197–200. Most of Viscount Kingsborough's life and fortune were devoted to his illustrated work, *Antiquities of Mexico* (nine volumes and a portion of a tenth volume, imperial folio, London, 1830–48). No anti-Christian spirit inspired his labours; on the contrary, he attempted to prove a Jewish migration to Mexico. Though the attempt failed, he bequeathed to posterity an invaluable work on the ancient religion of Mexico.

[2] Bonwick's *Egyptian Belief*, p. 370.

ourselves that Moses went up into a mountain to receive certain instructions from God, and " was there with the Lord *forty days and forty nights*, and he did neither eat bread nor drink water." On a second occasion, when he received the Ten Commandments, he was again with the Lord *forty days and forty niyhts*, and did neither eat bread nor drink water. Elijah fled to the desert, where an angel gave him cake and water, and in the strength of that meat he went for *forty days* without food. The number " forty " occurs over and over again in that portion of the Old Testament which the Higher Criticism has shown to be unhistorical. The Rationalist avers that the number " forty " is mythological, and that we have this story of the Forty Days' Fast and the Temptation in the New Testament because the writer wishes to show that Jesus Christ was proof against all temptation; that He, too, as well as other Christs, could resist the powers of the Prince of Evil. It may be urged that in all these cases the number is quite immaterial. Are we not, then, to take the author of " The Acts " literally when he informs us that Christ spent *forty days* on earth after His resurrection ?

The Miracles.—Not only Krishna and Buddha, but all leaders of religious movements, had the reputation of having performed miracles. Religions were established as much by the miracles as by the preachings. Miracles were needed in those days on all special occasions. Many of them are attested in the gravest manner by the gravest writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the people. Healing miracles, such as those performed by Jesus, were the commonest of all. The Gospel miracles are in no respect singular or more wonderful. Horus, as well as Krishna, *raised*

the dead to life. Bacchus *changed water into wine.* Æsculapius not only cured the sick, but *raised the dead.* Pausanias, the eminent Greek geographer and historian, writes that in the temple of Æsculapius at Epidaurus there was an old pillar dedicated to the memory of Hippolytus, who had been *raised from the dead.*[1] Apollonius of Tyana[2] was celebrated for the wonderful miracles he performed. He caused a devil to depart out of a youth, and he *restored a dead maiden to life.* The Christian Fathers inform us that Simon Magus, with the Devil's aid, could make his appearance wherever he pleased at any moment; could poise himself in the air; produce trees from the earth suddenly [the mango tree trick?]; fling himself from high precipices unhurt [the very feat suggested by the Devil in the Temptation]; and walk through the streets

[1] Middleton's *Works*, vol. i., pp. 63, 64. Conyers Middleton was principal librarian of Cambridge University. He also tells us that in the temples of Æsculapius all kinds of diseases were believed to be publicly cured, by the pretended help of the Deity, in proof of which there were erected in each temple columns of brass or marble, on which a distinct narrative of each particular cure was described. There is a remarkable fragment of one of these tables still extant, and exhibited by Gruter in his collection (just as it was found in the ruins of Æsculapius's temple in the Tiber island), which gives an account of two blind men restored to sight by Æsculapius, in the open view, and with the loud acclamation of the people, acknowledging the manifest power of the god. Compare St. Matthew ix. 27–30. Is it not truly marvellous to think that exactly the same sort of thing is going on at the various miracle-working shrines of Christendom at the present moment? Is it not also surprising to hear certain divines in our own country speak of the alleged miracles of the early Church as if they were real, and as if it were a sort of lost art due to our poorer faith in modern times? I am referring to sermons preached lately from various pulpits on the subject of Christian Science and Faith-cures. One wonders, too, what possible use this miraculous gift could have been to the primitive Church. It could not have been of much assistance for proselytising purposes when the same gift was possessed equally by the heathen. The miracles performed by demi-gods must have quite eclipsed those by Christian saints.

[2] Died 96 A.D. The legendary details are third century, and, therefore, *could* be Christian accretions.

accompanied by spirits of the dead. Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian, tells us that the Emperor Vespasian (born 9 A.D.) performed wonderful miracles for the good of mankind, and among others he describes the *cure of a blind man with the emperor's spittle.*

The Crucifixion.—In China the Holy One (Tien) dies to save the world. Osiris and Horus, the Egyptian gods who gave their lives for mankind, are both crucified in the heavens. "The sufferings and death of Osiris were the great mystery of the Egyptian religion. His being the Divine Goodness, and the abstract idea of 'good,' his manifestation upon earth (like a Hindoo god), his death and resurrection, and his office as judge of the dead in a future life, *look like the early revelation of a future manifestation of the deity converted into a mythological fable.*"[1] Mithras, the sun-god of the Persians, was a "Mediator" between God and men—the "Saviour," who, by his sufferings and death, worked their salvation. He was also called the "Word." Attys, called the "Only Begotten Son" and the "Saviour," was worshipped by the Phrygians, and represented by them as a man tied to a tree (the Phrygians were regarded as one of the oldest races of Asia Minor). Adonis (in Hebrew Adonai = "Our Lord") was another virgin-born "Saviour" who suffered for mankind. The yearly festival of Adonis in the spring was a special favourite with women. In the Old Testament reference is made to the weeping of the women over Tammuz, the Babylonian equivalent of Adonis (Ezekiel viii. 14). According to the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox,[2] he was the crucified

[1] Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii., p. 171.
[2] See his work, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, vol. ii., p. 113.

Tao (divine love personified). The Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, in the chapter on the Resurrection in his Hebrew lexicon, says: "I find myself obliged to refer Tammuz to that class of idols which were originally designed to represent the promised Saviour, the desire of all nations." Prometheus was a Saviour who suffered the most fearful tortures as the friend of the human race. Æschylus's tragedy, *Prometheus Vinctus*, was acted[1] in Athens *five hundred years before the Christian era*. Bacchus, whom most of us think of as the rollicking wine-god of classical mythology, is a slain Saviour.[2] We have it on the authority of a Christian Father that the Pagans adored crosses; for Tertullian, a Christian Father of the second and third centuries, writing to the Pagans, says: "The origin of your god is derived from figures moulded on a cross."[3]

When we turn to the New World we find the same worship of a crucified Saviour among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians. Lord Kingsborough tells us in his *Antiquities of Mexico* that, according to the belief of the ancient Mexicans, "the death of Quetzalcoatl upon the cross" was "an atonement for the

[1] In the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1905, Mr. Slade Butler points out, in his article on "The Greek Mysteries and the Gospel Narrative," that in the first century after Christ these mysteries, in one form or another, had become the recognised religion of the Greek world. Mr. Butler takes in turn all the main features of the Gospel narratives, and shows their close resemblance to incidents of the Greek mystery-dramas. The baptism of John, the triumphal procession in honour of Jesus, His clearing of the temple, *the cursing of the fig tree*, the Last Supper, the mocking of Jesus in His death-agony, are shown to have striking parallels in the sacred mysteries of the Greeks.

[2] Dupuis, *The Origin of all Religious Worship*, pp. 135 and 258; Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, vol. ii., p. 102; Knight, *The Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, p. xxii., note, and p. 98, note.

[3] *Apol.*, chap. xvi.; *Ad Nationes*, chap. xii.

sins of mankind."[1] Dr. Daniel Brinton, in his *Myths of the New World*, tells us that the Aztecs had a feast which they celebrated *in the early spring*, when "victims were nailed to a cross and shot with an arrow."[2] Alexander von Humboldt, in his *American Researches*, also speaks of this feast, at which the Mexicans crucified a man, and pierced him with an arrow. The author of *Monumental Christianity*, speaking of this, says: "Here is the old story of Prometheus crucified on the Caucasus, and of all other pagan crucifixions of the young incarnate divinities of India, Persia, Asia Minor, and Egypt."[3]

IS THE KRISHNA LEGEND BORROWED FROM CHRISTIANITY?

I have indicated a few of the more striking parallels in other religions besides Krishnaism and Buddhism. Did space permit, it could be shown that there are also parallels to the teaching of Christ, the darkness at the Crucifixion, the descent into Hell, the Resurrection, the claim of Jesus Christ to be "Alpha and Omega" (according to the Revelation of St. John), the prophecy of the Second Coming, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of the Trinity, the worship of the Blessed Virgin, the Christian symbols (cross, triangle, I.H.S., fish, serpent, dove, and lamb). I cannot understand what the Christian cause can gain by ascribing the parallels in Hindoo mythology to Christian sources, when there is all this mass of evidence for parallels that are quite as extraordinary (though less numerous)

[1] *Mexican Antiquities*, vol. vi., p. 166.
[2] *Myths of the New World*, p. 95.
[3] *Monumental Christianity*, p. 398.

in those ancient religions where the priority to Christianity cannot reasonably be denied.[1] Certainly the Krishna and Buddha parallels are extremely numerous and strikingly exact; but a policy which seeks to explain them in a different manner to that adopted in the case of the same phenomena in other religions, while it serves to confirm the suspicions of the sceptic, is doomed eventually to failure. I am presuming that I have made it quite clear that there is no question of Christian accretions, except in the case of Hindoo and Buddhist religions. How could there be? How can anyone in his senses, and knowing all we now know, pretend to say that the beliefs of the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians contain Christian accretions?[2] This being so, it is unnecessary, I think, to enter at any great length into the Krishna controversy. A scholarly investigation of it will be found in Mr. Robertson's book, *Christianity and Mythology*, where the theory of Christian accretions appears to be completely demolished.[3]

[1] With regard to parallels in the moral teaching, Canon Farrar, in his work, *Seekers after God*, has clearly shown that "to say that pagan morality kindled its faded taper at the Gospel light, whether furtively or unconsciously, that it dissembled the obligation and made a boast of the splendour, as if it were originally her own, is to make an assertion wholly untenable." He points out that the attempts of the Christian Fathers to make out Pythagoras a debtor to Hebraic wisdom, Plato an "Atticising Moses," Aristotle a learner of ethics from a Jew, Seneca a correspondent of St. Paul, were due "in some cases to *ignorance*, in some to a *want of perfect honesty* in controversial dealing."

[2] Not that attempts have never been made in the past to drag in this theory. In a footnote on page 374 of Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, we read: "Lord Kingsborough wrought hard in the last generation to prove that the Biblical system was known to the Mexicans; and there was an early theory that St. Thomas, that ubiquitous missionary, had given them Christianity" (Prescott, pp. 234, 261).

[3] Professor Max Müller also opposes the theory of Christian derivation; and Professor Monier Williams, the accepted authority on Hindooism, writing for the S. P. G. in his book, *Indian Wisdom*, and

Both Mr. Robertson and Professor Tiele conclusively prove that the "Hindoos could perfectly well have borrowed, if they did borrow, from Egypt before Christianity was heard of."[1] "In point of fact, there is hardly a leading detail in the Krishna birth legend which is not variously paralleled in other early non-Christian mythology."[2] Mr. Robertson is of opinion that "the further we collate the main Christian myth-notions with those of Krishnaism, the more clearly does it appear that, instead of the latter being borrowed from the former, they are, not indeed the originals from which Christianity borrowed, but always presumptively the more ancient, and in one or two cases they do appear to be the actual sources of Gospel stories." "The lateness of the Purânic stories in literary form is no argument against their antiquity. Scholars are agreed that late documents often preserve extremely old myth-material." "The leading elements in the Krishna myth are inexplicable

speaking of the *Bhagavadgita*, says: "It may reasonably be questioned whether there could have been any actual contact of the Hindoo system with Christianity without a more satisfactory result in the modification of Pantheistic and anti-Christian ideas." Again he says: "The religious creeds, rites, customs, and habits of thought of the Hindoos generally have altered little since the days of Manu, 500 years B.C." The Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, speaking on this subject in his *Aryan Mythology*, says: "There is no more room for inferring foreign influence in the growth of any of these myths than, as Bunsen rightly insists, there is room for tracing Christian influence in the early epical literature of the Teutonic tribes. Practically the myths of Krishna seem to have been fully developed in the days of Megasthenes (fourth century B.C.), who identifies him with the Greek Hercules." Megasthenes wrote a work on India, which was the chief source of the later Greek information on the subject.

[1] See *Christianity and Mythology*, Part II., pp. 171, 188, 183, 302, and 300. If the Christian accretion theory were correct, it ought to be of the greatest aid in the conversion of educated Hindoos and Buddhists; yet it is with these that missionary efforts meet with such scant success.

[2] *Ibid.*

save on the view that the cultus is ancient." "The close coincidences in the legends of Krishna and Buddha are to be explained in terms of borrowing by the latter from the former, and not *vice versâ*."[1] To prevent the chance of any misunderstanding, I may add here that the denial of the "Christian accretions" theory does not convey also the implication that the Bible story was borrowed from the Krishna and Buddha myths. On the contrary, the strong probability is that there has been little or no borrowing either way—that there is a common source for both in earlier Aryan and Semitic myths.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Robertson's conclusions, I hope I may have so far carried the reader with me that he will be prepared to admit that there are very many striking resemblances to the Gospel stories in those ancient beliefs whose priority to Christianity is not disputed. There is not only an extraordinary similarity in beliefs, but also in moral teachings. The teachings of Confucius, Mencius, and Wang Yang Ming might, as Professor Nitobe points out,[2] just as well be considered plagiarisms from the Divine library, for they furnish numerous remarkable parallels to the New Testament teaching. Taoism, the philosophy of Laotze, for a long time successfully rivalled the more utilitarian system of Confucius, and its close agreement with many of the teachings of Christ is most noticeable. The morals of the ancient Egyptians are clearly set forth in the Book of the Dead, which came into use after 2000 B.C. They indicate a far higher standard than existed in Israel

[1] *Christianity and Mythology.*

[2] In his book, *Bushido*, pp. 15–19 and 24.

in David's time. "Yet," as Dr. Callaway remarks,[1] "in traditions which still linger among us, the law under which David lived and reigned was perfect and divine; while the name of Egypt stands for darkness and sin." But perhaps "the pagan religion in which, with regard to its organic system, much of its history, and many of its minute details, the parallel to Christianity is most startling is the religion of Mithra."[2]

Now that these resemblances are no longer attributed to a device of the Evil One, an explanation for them is urgently required. The explanation from the Christian side is the theory of a Progressive Revelation; and, apparently, there can be no other, if Christianity be true. The reader has been put in possession of a few details of the remarkable parallels, and he should apply this theory for himself to each and all of them, and see whether it furnishes a fair working hypothesis, whether his mind can accept the explanation now offered to him, and, I might almost add, whether he can honestly continue to call himself a Christian believer. Let him ask himself which is the more probable—that the common mythos foreshadowed the Bible stories, or that the latter were derived from the former?

§ 3. *Parallels in the Beliefs of Primitive Man, and Some Remarks Upon Them.*

I must ask the reader's patience if I postpone my

[1] P. 152 of his book, *King David of Israel* (Watts, 1905).

[2] Quoted from Mr. Mallock's essay on "Christianity as a Natural Religion," in the *Nineteenth Century* for September, 1905. In case any of my readers still cling to the theory that all peculiarly close resemblances between Christianity and Paganism may be accounted for by Christian accretions in the latter, I would ask them to study carefully the note on Mithraism at the end of this chapter.

final remarks on Progressive Revelation until I have adduced some illustrations of the beliefs and customs of primitive man, as here also this same theory has to apply. Thus far the pagan beliefs have appeared to be of a comparatively harmless character; but this can by no means be said of the beliefs of savage man. He does not confine himself, like his more civilised brother, to mystical beliefs in Saviours who once upon a time suffered for him, and whose body and blood are to be *symbolically* assimilated; but, being of a realistic (or shall we say materialistic?) turn of mind, he prefers[1] to satisfy his religious emotions with the spectacle of a real human-divine sufferer, and by a sacrificial feast of real flesh and blood. Can this be God's method of revealing Himself? True, the religious convictions of civilised man have been a fruitful source of human agony, both physical and mental, in many a bloody fight and massacre, in cruel and relentless persecutions, in every refinement of excruciating torture and pitiable distress to body and mind; but it is possible to gloze over all this with various specious arguments. It is not so easy to do so with examples drawn from the history of savage races. The only thing is that so few have ever had these examples brought before them, or, at least, have ever thought of connecting them with anything that has to do with the truth of Christianity. I shall, therefore, now give some illustrations of the beliefs and customs of primitive man. A vivid description may succeed in convincing the reader of the absurdity of the new theory, where mere vague

[1] The inevitable result of a restricted intellectual development, as will be seen by a study of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, Vol. I., Part I., chapter on "The Primitive Man—Emotional."

ideas of savage ritual would fail. We will begin with the ancient American.[1]

THE RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT AMERICA.

"Terrible was the prestige of the priesthood of Mexico. The greater the State grew, the larger were the hecatombs of human victims. Almost every god had to be propitiated in the same way; but above all must the war-god be for ever glutted with the smoking hearts of slain captives. Scarcely any historian, says Prescott, estimates the number of human beings sacrificed yearly throughout the Empire at less than 20,000, and some make it 50,000. The Franciscan monks computed that 2,500 victims were annually sacrificed in the town and district of Mexico alone. Of this doomed host, Huitzilopochtli had the lion's share; and it is recorded that, at the dedication of his great new temple A.D. 1486 [that is to say, nearly 1,500 years after God was pleased to reveal Himself definitely to mankind], there were slain in his honour 70,000 prisoners of war, who had been reserved for the purpose for years throughout the Empire. They formed a train two miles long, and the work of priestly butchery went on for several days."[2]

"At every festival of the God there was a new hecatomb of victims, and we may conceive how the

[1] "Of the human sacrifices of rude peoples, those of the Mexicans are perhaps the most instructive, for in them the anthropic character of the victim comes out most clearly." (Professor Robertson Smith, *Religion among the Semites*, p. 347. Mr. W. R. Smith was a distinguished Scottish Biblical scholar and Orientalist. From 1881 he was associated as joint editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* with T. Spencer Baynes, after whose death in 1887 he was sole editor.)

[2] For this and the following graphic accounts I am indebted to Mr. J. M. Robertson's book, *Pagan Christs*, Part IV.—"The Religion of Ancient America."

chronic spectacle burnt itself in on the imagination of the people.....And then the horror of the sacrificial act! In the great majority of the sacrifices the victim was laid living on the convex stone and held by the limbs, while the slayer cut open his breast with the sacred flint (or rather obsidian) knife—the ancient knife used before men had the use of metals, and therefore most truly religious—and tore out the palpitating heart, which was held on high to the all-seeing sun, before being set to burn in incense in front of the idol, whose lips, and the walls of whose shrines, were devoutly daubed with blood."[1]

"In connection with one annual festival of Tezcatlipoca, the Creator and 'soul of the world,' who combined the attributes of perpetual youthful beauty with the function of the God of Justice and Retribution, as the Winter Sun, there was selected for immolation a young male captive of especial beauty, who was treated with great reverence for a whole year before being sacrificed.....When all was over the priests piously improved the occasion, preaching that all this had been typical of human destiny, while the aristocracy sacramentally ate the victim's roasted limbs."[2]

"That the Mexicans were no longer cannibals by taste is shown by the fact that in the great siege by Cortez they died of starvation by thousands. They never ate fellow citizens: only the sacrificially slain captive."[3]

"The strangest thing of all is that their frightful system of sacrifice was bound up not only with a strict and ascetic sexual morality, but with an emphatic

[1] See note 2, p. 157. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

humanitarian doctrine. If asceticism be virtue, they cultivated virtue zealously. There was a Mexican Goddess of Love, and there was of course plenty of vice; but nowhere could men win a higher reputation for sanctity by living in celibacy. Their saints were numerous. They had nearly all the formulas of Christian morality, so called. The priests themselves mostly lived in strict celibacy; and they educated children with the greatest vigilance in their temple schools and higher colleges. They taught the people to be peaceful, to bear injuries with meekness, to rely on God's mercy and not on their own merits; they taught, like Jesus and the Pagans, that adultery could be committed by the eyes and the heart; and, above all, they exhorted men to feed the poor. The public hospitals were carefully attended to, at a time when some Christian countries had none. They had the practice of confession and absolution, and in the regular exhortation of the confessor there was this formula: Clothe the naked and feed the hungry, whatever privations it may cost thee; for remember their flesh is like thine, and they are men like thee; cherish the sick, for they are the image of God. And in this very same exhortation there was further urged on the penitent the special duty of instantly *procuring a slave for sacrifice to the deity*."[1]

The Mexican believed in the resurrection of the Man-God. Dr. Frazer relates how "the idea that the God thus slain in the person of his representative comes to life again immediately was graphically represented in the Mexican ritual by skinning the slain man-god, and clothing in his skin a living man,

[1] See note 2, p. 157.

who thus became the new representative of the godhead."[1]

It is civilisation that determines the tone of religion. In Peru, where the civilisation was higher and the priesthood less powerful, the sacrificial system was less burdensome and less terrible. Thus human sacrifices were not so general. The Peruvians had the institution of a Holy Communion, in which they ate of a sacred bread, *sancu*, sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed sheep, the priest pronouncing this formula: "Take heed how ye eat this *sancu;* for he who eats it in sin and with a double will and heart is seen by our Father, the Sun, who will punish him with grievous troubles." The Spaniards themselves recognised that the Mexicans ate the mystical body of the God with every sign of devotion and contrition; and they were so far from depreciating the Peruvian Communion that they supposed St. Bartholomew had established it.[2]

With these facts confronting us, it is nothing short of marvellous to find many learned divines completely ignoring them in their apologetic efforts. I say marvellous, for I assume they possess honesty of purpose and an acquaintance with ancient beliefs; but perhaps I am wrong in the latter assumption. The continuance of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist until the present day is held to be one of the evidences for the Christian faith, and this on the ground that the rite could not have survived if Christ had not founded it. For some reason, best known to the

[1] Quoted from his celebrated book, *The Golden Bough*. Dr. J. S Frazer is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Hon. D.C.L., Oxford; Hon. LL.D., Glasgow; Hon. Litt.D., Durham.

[2] See note 2, p. 157.

apologist, the almost universal observance of the same ceremony, ages before the Christian era, and its survival[1] among the nations who finally adopted Christianity, are entirely overlooked. Thus Dr. Maclear, in his book, *The Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, says: "The singular rite has survived all the vicissitudes of more than 1,000 years.....The early Christian would inform a supposed questioner that the meal was a sacrificial feast, instituted by Him from Whom we are called Christians, and Who died for us on the Cross. Here, then, we are on solid ground. The rite, *so unique and so unprecedented*, rests on an objective historical fact." One would think that Dr. Maclear had entirely neglected the study of ancient and even modern beliefs.[2]

[1] We have the witness of the Christian Fathers. Justin Martyr, after describing the institution of the Lord's Supper (1 *Apol.*, chap. 66), goes on to say: "Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of the one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn." Tertullian intimates that "the devil, by the mysteries of his idols, imitates even the main parts of the divine mysteries. He also baptises his worshippers in water, and makes them believe that this purifies them of their crimes. There Mithra sets his mark on the forehead of his soldiers; he celebrates the oblation of bread; he offers an image of the resurrection, and presents at once the crown and sword; he limits his chief priest to a single marriage; he even has virgins and his ascetics (*continentes*)." (Præscr., c. 40. Cp. De Bapt., c. 5; De Corona, c. 15. Quoted on p. 322 of J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs.*) We have also the witness of modern discoveries. For example, Professor Franz Cumont, in his work, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, gives a photograph of a recently-discovered bas-relief, representing a Mithraic communion. On a small tripod is the bread, in the form of wafers, each *marked with a cross*.

[2] Very similar ceremonies are to be found among the heathen to-day. For instance, something very like our Eucharistical rite is performed in modern Japan. Looking on at a service in a Shinto temple, I was much struck by the extraordinary similarity of the whole ceremony. It was a sort of High Mass with Gregorian music. The blessed wafers are not eaten on the premises, but are taken away by the worshippers to be used in time of sickness. The worshippers, I may mention, were all of the poorer and more ignorant classes.

VEGETATION GODS.

There is another class of primitive sacrificial custom which claims our careful attention, in order that we may see whether it manifests the beginning of a revelation from God. Even if we could agree that all these gruesome details represent a savage's glimmerings of the truth, we must allow that the theory collapses when the object of the custom can be shown to have little or nothing to do with religion in any true sense of the word. Subtle intellects are capable of maintaining that the worship of ancestors, or of the Sun, or of imaginary devils, betokens a dim perception of God; but when it comes to the propitiation of a vegetation-god solely for the sake of the material benefits expected to be derived from his cult, surely it is time to dismiss the theory as worthless. "All the world over, savages and semi-civilised people are in the habit of sacrificing human victims, whose bodies are buried in the field with the seed of corn, or other bread stuffs. Often enough the victim's blood is mixed with grain in order to fertilise it. The most famous instance is that of the Khonds of Orissa, who chose special victims, known as Meriahs, and offered them up to ensure good harvests. The Meriah was often kept years before being sacrificed. He was regarded as a consecrated being, and treated with extreme affection, mingled with deference."[1] "The periodical sacrifices," says Dr. Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, "were generally so arranged by tribes and divisions of tribes that each head of a family was enabled, at least once a year, to procure

[1] See "Gods of Cultivation" in Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God.*

a shred of flesh for his fields, generally about the time when his chief crop was laid down." Khonds in distress often sold their children as Meriahs, "considering the beatification of their souls certain, and their death, for the benefit of mankind, the most honourable possible." Their children were representatives of the Deity. With advancing civilisation we have the substitution of an animal in place of the human representative of the God. In some cases the worshippers tore the living animal to pieces with their teeth. The rending and devouring of live bulls, calves, and goats seems to have been a regular feature of the Dionysiac rites, the participators in the orgy fancying that they were devouring the actual body and blood of the god. With the further advance of civilisation (or, according to the latest Christian theory, with the further advance of God's revelation), as in the Mediterranean region, the bodies of the gods of agriculture were eaten by their votaries in the shape of cakes of bread, or other food stuffs, and their blood was drunk in the form of wine.[1]

If Dr. Frazer be right as to the priority of the idea of a vegetation-god in cults commonly associated with the Sun, then Krishna, Osiris, Dionysus or Bacchus, Adonis, Attis, and other Saviours whose deaths and resurrections were annually celebrated at the spring equinox (our Easter!), may have been primarily vegetation-victims; the abstract ideas, which identified the death and resurrection of the god with the annual

[1] Regarding this, Mr. Grant Allen remarks: When Dionysus became the annual or biennial vine-god victim, "it was inevitable that his worshippers should have seen his resurrection and embodiment in the vine, and should have regarded the wine it yielded as the blood of the god."

winter sleep and spring revival, being finally fathered upon the worship. Whatever explanation may be the correct one for the phenomenon of a common mythos over the greater portion of the globe, it is certainly not that of a Progressive Revelation. Such an explanation has never been mooted by anyone but the Christian apologist. "Among early men and savages every act of life has a sacred significance, and agriculture especially is everywhere and always invested with a special sanctity. To us it would seem natural that the act of sowing seed should be regarded as purely practical and physiological; that the seed should be looked upon merely as the part of the plant intended for reproduction, and that its germination should be accepted as a natural and normal process. Savages and early men, however, had no such conceptions. To them the whole thing is a piece of natural magic."[1] Are we, then, to regard this working of primitive thought as the working of the Holy Spirit? Surely we may dismiss such a preposterous theory? It will serve the Church no good purpose; for, while thinking men will be further than ever estranged, it will furnish the militant agnostic with a fresh weapon for his attacks upon her.

WHY MEN EAT THEIR GOD.

Whatever may have been the ultimate origin of the idea of God, and of the belief in His expiatory death and subsequent resurrection, the origin of the custom of eating Him sacramentally permits of a very simple explanation. "Du Chaillu notes that some of his West

[1] *The Evolution of the Idea of God* (chapter on "The Gods of Cultivation").

African followers, when going on an expedition, brought out the skulls of their ancestors (which they religiously preserved) and scraped off small portions of the bone, which they mixed with water and drank, giving as a reason for this conduct that their ancestors were brave, and that by drinking a portion of them they too became brave and fearless. Here we have a simple and early case of that habit of 'eating the god' to whose universality and importance Mr. Frazer has called attention."[1] It is a common early belief, which may still be met with, that, by eating a certain animal, the consumer will become possessed of its qualities. It is notorious, for instance, that the Miris of Northern India prize tiger's flesh for men, because it gives them strength and courage. And apparently the same belief exists also in Southern India, for I remember our Madrassi ayah—a Christian, by the bye—begging for the hind leg of a panther (shot by my wife), and explaining that she wanted to eat it in order to make her *muzbut* (strong). Spencer discusses this primitive idea in his *Principles of Sociology*. He explains how "attributes or properties, as we understand them, are not recognisable by the savage—are abstractions which neither his faculties can grasp nor his language express. Hence certain beliefs, everywhere conspicuous among the uncivilised. A special potency which some object or part of an object displays belongs to it in such a wise that it may be acquired by consuming or possessing this object or part. The powers of a conquered antagonist are supposed to be gained by devouring him. The Dakotah eats the heart of a slain foe to increase his own courage; the

[1] Quoted from *Evolution of the Idea of God* (chapter on "The Origin of Gods").

New Zealander swallows his dead enemy's eyes that he may see further; the Abipone consumes tiger's flesh thinking so to gain the tiger's strength and ferocity—cases which recall the legend about Zeus devouring Metis, that he might become possessed of her wisdom. Clearly the implied mode of thought, shown even in the medical prescriptions of past ages, is a mode of thought necessarily persisting until analysis has disclosed the complexities of causal relations."[1] "The belief that the qualities of any individual are appropriated by eating him is illustrated by the statement of Stanbridge, that when Australians kill an infant they feed an older child with it, believing 'that by its eating as much as possible of the roasted infant it will possess the strength of both.' Elsewhere, dead relations are consumed in pursuance of an allied belief. We read of the Cucamas that, 'as soon as a relation died, these people assembled and ate him roasted or boiled, according as he was thin or fat!'"[2]

If the apologist, nothing daunted, maintains that there is a religious germ in these primitive superstitions, it is practically tantamount to saying that every superstition contains such a germ; that superstition and religion are, in fact, often synonymous terms. I thought it was only the sceptic who said that. Before committing himself any further to a supernatural theory which is so obviously untenable, I do entreat the average apologist to study carefully the works of great thinkers who have made primitive man their especial study. Let him read, for instance,

[1] *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. (chapter on "Primitive Ideas," p. 102).
[2] *Principles of Sociology* (chapter on "Inspiration, Divination, Exorcism, and Sorcery," p. 241).

Herbert Spencer's *Data of Sociology*, where he will find a natural and mind-satisfying explanation of primitive ideas concerning supernatural agents, ghosts, spirits, demons, gods, resurrection, another life, inspiration, divination, sacrifices, fasting, propitiation, and prayer. He will learn, also, much that he ought to know concerning ancestor-worship, idol-worship, fetish-worship, animal-worship, plant-worship, and nature-worship, and the heathen deities generally. He should also read Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and other scholarly and informing works of this description, instead of confining his studies to works of an apologetic character, where everything incompatible with existing Christian theories is carefully omitted, or coloured out of all recognition.

§ 4. *The Solar Myth.*

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

The resemblances to ancient myths are not confined to the principal incidents in the life of Christ. Many of the most noteworthy events related in the Old Testament have their counterpart in widespread legends. That the stories of the Creation, Fall, and Deluge are legends is well known—a visit to the British Museum ought to convince the most captious critic on this point—but it is not so well known that ancient folk-lore contains stories similar to those of the Tower of Babel, the trial of Abraham's faith, Jacob's vision of the ladder between earth and heaven, the finding of Moses in an ark, the transformation of Moses' rod into a serpent, the Israelites' passage through the Red Sea on dry land, Moses smiting the rock and thus producing water, the reception by

Moses of the Ten Commandments from God, Balaam's expostulating ass, Joshua's command to the sun and the sun's obedience, Samson and his exploits, Elijah's ascent to heaven, and Jonah's sojourn for three days and three nights in the belly of a fish.

This Jonah episode has an important bearing on the subject under discussion, as it is a typical case of an absorption of the universal mythos. Among other authorities, Godfrey Higgins tells us: "The story of Jonas swallowed up by a whale is nothing but part of the fiction of Hercules, described in the Heracleid or Labours of Hercules, of whom the same story was told, and who was swallowed up at the very same place, Joppa, and for the same period of time, three days."[1] Again, with the exception of those who refuse to acknowledge anything damaging to the literal truth of Holy Writ, all professors of theology are agreed that the miracle recorded in the book of Jonah is not an historical fact. This in spite of the alleged personal interviews with God as there recounted.[2] Now, the story of the three days' sojourn of Hercules and other heroes in the bowels of the earth, or the belly of a fish, is only a different version of the myth concerning the death and resurrection of a god which we find to be prevalent over nearly the whole world. And, according to the new Christian theory, this shows an intuition of Christ's death and resurrection!

ANTICIPATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY IN SOLAR MYTHS.

The advanced theologians, who are presenting us with this theory, have to explain, among other things,

[1] *Anacalypsis*, vol. i., p. 688.

[2] To explain this by allowing for oriental imagery only throws discredit upon historians on whom we are relying for *facts* upon which the scheme of Christianity depends.

how it was that Christ himself took the "Jonah and whale" story seriously, treating it as sober history. He spoke of no mere allegory when He said: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."[1] Neither Christ himself nor the Apostles inform us of any revelation embodied in *heathen* beliefs. Very much the reverse. Yet the Bishop of Birmingham (late of Worcester), speaking to the adversaries of Christianity, informs them: "You say that we find in Christianity the relics of paganism. On the contrary, we find in paganism, intermingled with much that is false, superstitious, and horrible, the *anticipations of Christianity*." Is that why we have paid them the compliment of adopting their dates for the birth and death of their Saviours?[2] Canon P. H. Robinson goes so

[1] St. Matthew xii. 40.

[2] Christ's birth was ultimately placed at the winter solstice, the birthday of the sun-god, in the most popular cults; and, while that is fixed as an anniversary, the date of the Crucifixion is made to vary from year to year in order to conform to the astronomical principle on which the Jews, following the sun-worshippers, had fixed their Passover. This ignorance of the early Church concerning the dates of the Miraculous Birth, the Death, and Resurrection is an exceedingly suspicious circumstance. If the fundamental verities were an objective fact to the early Christians, how *could* the dates have been so utterly forgotten that dates belonging to idolatrous superstitions had to be adopted? It is perplexing enough that God should have allowed the memory of His Son's life on earth to be handed down for a considerable time by tradition only; but that He should have permitted such lapses of memory and the substitution of the dates of pagan festivals is to me altogether inconceivable. It could not but raise suspicion concerning His revelation in future thinking generations. We have a certain knowledge of the dates of comparatively unimportant events in the world's history, ages before the Christian era. If these important dates could be forgotten, what else may not have been forgotten; what else may not have been substituted in the place of forgotten incidents? Again, on what dates, I wonder, did the disciples and their converts celebrate the anniversaries of these great events? The question is of more importance than perhaps appears at first sight. The public will soon be

far as to say that Christianity has benefited by the addition of heathen thought (N.B. He owns there has been this addition), and that it is yet to benefit by further contact with heathen thought! His actual words are: "*If Greek and Roman thought were needed for a full appreciation of the meaning of the Incarnation, why may we not say the same of Indian and Chinese thought? Surely we are justified in believing that every country and every people have something to contribute to Christianity, and that the completion of the Christian revelation awaits the contribution of each. We believe that there are many important aspects of the Christian truth which have never been understood, simply because Christianity has not yet been reflected in the experience of those nations of the world which are still heathen.*"[1]

THE CHRISTIAN THEORY IGNORED BY SCIENCE.

The earliest attempts at a crude science of mythology were efforts to reconcile the legends of the gods and heroes with the religious sentiment which recognised in these beings objects of worship and respect.

asking the Church for a satisfactory explanation, and she must be prepared to furnish it. In the *Daily Telegraph* last Christmas (1904) the public were informed that "the most erudite archæologists and professors of Church history confess that there is not a particle of evidence, either Biblical or traditional, for the claim of December 25th to be the birthday of Christ, and that everything goes to prove that our existing festival of the Nativity was introduced to replace the heathen festival of the 'sol invictus' in Southern Italy, and of the Yule or Winter solstice festival among the ancient Teutons." Again, in the *Daily Graphic* last Easter (1905), the public will have read that "there is no particular sanctity in the 'Table to Find Easter,' based as it is upon the calculations of a pagan astronomer who lived four hundred years before Christ." In France the Christian names of the four statutory holidays have been abolished by law. Christmas is called the Festival of the Family, and so on. The time is coming, and is even now at hand, when the English public will discover ugly facts about Christianity without having to read books published by freethinking firms —books which the parson advises us to leave severely alone.

[1] *Studies in the Character of Christ*, vi. 102.

When the Christians first approached the problem of heathen mythology, they agreed with St. Augustine that the gods were real persons—but diabolical, not divine. "Some later philosophers, especially of the seventeenth century, misled by the resemblance between Biblical narratives and ancient myths, came to the conclusion that the Bible contains a pure, the myths a distorted form of an original revelation."[1] Now, however, in tracing myths and legends to their probable origins, the modern mythologist never dreams of calling to his aid any supernatural theory.

Myths present, I take it, two main problems—first as to their origin, and second as to their resemblances to Biblical narratives. Some mythologists, while no longer allowing orthodox tradition to hamper them, only profess to answer the first question. They disclaim the obligation of entering the arena of theological controversy. It is important that the Church should thoroughly realise that any disagreement there may be among mythologists, as to the solution of the first problem—the origin of myths—has little or no bearing upon the solution of the second problem—the Bible parallels. What does it matter whether the gods had a vegetable or a solar[2] origin, or arose, as Max Müller thought, from "a disease of language"? The all-important question for Christians is: Can

[1] *Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Mythology."

[2] The following statement by Canon Cheyne in a recent article in the *Contemporary Review* (March, 1905, "Shall we Put the Clock Back in Biblical Criticism?") is instructive. He says: "It may be well for me to say here as a fact, and not as a mere opinion, that the theory which is now advocated by leading German Assyriologists, that '*astral Myths*' *are the* '*outer garment*' *of the Biblical stories* of primitive times (I quote from Hummel, whom Dr. Reich apparently regards with some favour), is not the result of mere 'philological jugglery,' but a fine specimen of concentrated intellectual work."

any of these possible origins point to a Progressive Revelation, and, if not, how are we to account for the Bible parallels?

THE SUN AS A SYMBOL.

Suppose that, whatever the ultimate origin may have been, certain myths containing the parallels are, as we know them, solar myths (and on this point mythologists are now in complete accord); how can a belief be, at one and the same time, a solar myth and also an allegory expressing a spiritual truth? The sun is the object of worship, and its apparent movements give rise to myths concerning the birth, death, and resurrection of a Saviour.[1] Can we call this Progressive Revelation? "Certainly," the apologist may reply; "is there no bright Sun of Righteousness—no personal and loving Son of God, of whom the material sun has been the type or symbol, in all ages and among all nations? What power is it that comes from the sun to give light and heat to all created things? If the symbolical sun leads such a great and heavenly flock, what must be

[1] At the winter solstice the sun seemed to the ancients to be commencing its annual journey round the heavens. Accordingly, December 25th was considered to be the sun's birthday, which was annually celebrated by a great festival in many parts of the heathen world—in China, India, Persia, Egypt, and also in ancient Greece, Rome, Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain, Ireland, and America. Similarly at the vernal equinox, the sun, which has been below the equator, suddenly appears to rise above it, and so, usually upon a date calculated by the pagan astronomers (and corresponding roughly to our Easter), we find that throughout a considerable portion of the ancient world, after mourning the sun's death (sometimes for a period of three days), the Resurrection was celebrated with great rejoicings. Primitive man regarded all sensible objects as instinct with a conscious life. He noted the changes of days and years, and the objects which so changed were to him as living things. The rising and setting sun, the return of summer and winter, became a drama in which the actors were his friends or enemies. It was no allegory, but, strange as it appears to us now, all an absolute reality.

said of the true and only begotten Son of God? If Apollo was adopted by early Christian art as a type of the Good Shepherd of the New Testament, this interpretation of the sun-god among all nations must be the solution of the universal mythos. What other solution can it have? To what other historical personage but Christ can it apply? If this mythos has no spiritual meaning, all religion becomes mere idolatry, or the worship of material things."[1]

Will this sort of reasoning satisfy the average man? To begin with, the sun-worshippers themselves had no idea that the sun was, as is now alleged, the symbol of a great Truth. The sun, and nothing else but the sun, was the object of their worship. What a waste of worship for thousands upon thousands of years! —worship that might have been centred upon the true God. Even now, nigh on 2,000 years after God was pleased at last to reveal Himself, as we are told, to all mankind, the greater portion do not know Him, or they deny Him. If God intended the sun to be a symbol of Christ, why have we never been told this before? Why even now is it only put forward by a certain school of apologists in costly books that few will ever set their eyes upon? It is noteworthy, too, that the horrors that accompanied the worship of this same "bright Sun" are discreetly kept in the background by these advocates of the "symbol" theory.

§ 5. *Concluding Remarks on Christian and Anti-Christian Theories.*

If Progressive Revelation be true, it is the most

[1] See p. 117 of *Monumental Christianity; or, the Art and Symbolism of the Primitive Church as Witness and Teachers of the One Catholic Faith and Practice*, by the Rev. J. P. Lundy, Presbyter. (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1876.)

marvellous proof of the truth of Christianity—far the greatest proof that has ever yet been presented to us. Far greater, for instance, than the prophecies of those so-called prophets of the Old Testament, who, it now transpires, were only anticipating or describing events of their own times. It is such a proof as Christianity is in dire need of just now—a proof that will save her from a peril which every hour brings nearer. Why, then, do we hear so little of this great discovery from the pulpit?[1] How comes it that it is discovered so many years after the fulfilment of these unconscious[2] prophecies of the pagans? Why is it produced merely to confute the sceptic and restore confidence to that infinitesimally small number who happen to have studied, and therefore to have had their suspicions aroused by, Comparative Mythology? We are to believe that God revealed Himself by an exceedingly slow and painful process, extending over many thousands

[1] The following from a sermon by the Bishop of Manchester, preached in Manchester Cathedral on Sunday, September 4th, 1887, forms a striking exception to the rule. "The sufficient answer," says the Bishop, "to ninety out of a hundred of the ordinary objections to the Bible, as the record of a divine education of our race, is given in that one word—*development*. And to what are we indebted for that potent word, which, as with the wand of a magician, has at the same moment so completely transformed our knowledge and dispelled our difficulties? *To modern science, resolutely pursuing its search for truth in spite of popular obloquy*, and—alas! that one should have to say it—*in spite, too often, of theological denunciation!*" (Quoted by Professor Huxley in his essay on "An Episcopal Trilogy.") Would that there were equal candour all round! But this indebtedness of theology to science in spite of itself is certainly one of the many workings of the Holy Spirit which are quite inexplicable. All the more so when we remember that truth-seeking scientists are, nowadays, usually agnostics.

[2] *Un*conscious prophecies are now all the order of the day. The "Higher Criticism" admits that the Old Testament "prophecies" were the words of men guessing at what they had reason to believe would probably happen in the immediate future; but it tells us that we must consider these words as unconscious prophecies of events that occurred some hundreds of years afterwards!

of years, and entailing the most horrible customs among savages. This process, mark you, not only led to the establishment of Christianity as the world became more civilised, but to the establishment of those other great religions which to this day are hostile to the reception of Christianity! Simple-minded people will never be induced to agree that revelation can be progressive in the manner now indicated to us by the apologist. Rather they will agree with the Rationalist, who denies the originality of Christianity, contending that it is a cult which adopted, step by step, the mysteries, the miracles, and the myths of the popular Gentile religions. Some freethinkers, indeed, go so far as to say that the whole Gospel story may be nothing more than a myth; but the greater number consider that there is a substratum of truth, and that round this have slowly gathered the religious ideas and doctrines that were current in the old pagan world. The precise manner in which, they conjecture, the transformation actually took place is a large subject, and there are differences of opinion—*e.g.*, some are inclined to think that Essenism, others that Mithraism, played a leading part; but the point to be borne in mind is that there is no difficulty whatever in understanding how the absorption of myths[1] could have taken place, or how

[1] We have a perfect illustration of the possibility and rapidity of the legend-making process in the nineteenth century. The Bab (or "gateway") was a Persian reformer who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the authorities in 1850. Within forty years an evidently mythical version of his life was current among his followers in the form of a Gospel. Babism inculcates a high morality, and there is a likelihood of its becoming paramount in Persia. For further information on this new religion see *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi*, by Myron H. Phelps (Putnam).

the Christian cult could have arisen and prospered.[1]

I especially mention this, as some apologists argue that there was not sufficient time for heathen accretions between the death of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels. I can only again repeat the remark of a well-known professor of Church history, Dr. Harnack. "We know that the Gospels come from a time in which the marvellous may be said to have been something of almost daily occurrence. *We now know that eminent persons have not to wait until they have been long dead, or even for several years, to have miracles reported to them; they are reported at once, often the very next day.*" Also, I should call attention to the notes on Essenism and Mithraism at the close of this chapter, as they contain the answer to this final objection. But, personally, I fail to see how the "time" objection can in any case be maintained when we remember that the whole world had already been conversant for ages past with stories of suffering Saviours, similar in all essentials to the Gospel narratives. Besides, we know that documents have been tampered with more or less (the sceptic says "more," the apologist "less"), and that the composition of the Gospels took place many years after the events they purport to describe; while the age was one when men were extremely credulous, and when, consciously and unconsciously, imposing upon this credulity was the ordinary method of propagating a Faith.

[1] See remarks in Chap. VII. on the sophism which regards the spread of Christianity as an argument for its truth.

ARGUMENT FROM ESSENISM.

Regarding the difficulty of supposing that Jesus or the Evangelists could have been imbued with any sun-myth ideas, we must take into consideration the existence at that time of the Jewish sect, the Essenes. It seems quite possible that they considered Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah they were expecting, and that they came over to Christianity in a body. This monastic brotherhood, living in settlements in the desert west of the Dead Sea, not only placed love of God, of goodness, and of man as articles in their programme, but also sought with wonderful energy, according to their lights, to realise them in their life. Canon Cheyne places them among the number of those who prepared the way for the new world's religion. This seems to have been the very reason of their disappearance in the second century A.D.—Christianity *dissolved them.* So much so that the Essenes (often called Therapeutæ or healers) are identified by Eusebius with the Christian monks, and this opinion was generally adopted by the Fathers (see chap. xvii., bk. ii., p. 117, of *The Church History of Eusebius*, translated by the Rev. A. C. McGiffert, under the editorial supervision of Henry Wace, D.D., and Philip Schaff, D.D.).

From a perusal of the article on the "Essenes" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, it will be seen that Essenism is not a purely Jewish product, but that "Persian and Babylonian influence may reasonably be admitted." Indeed, Bishop Lightfoot goes so far as to describe the Essenes as sun-worshippers. Again, Canon Cheyne informs us that "Oriental influences were, so to speak, in the air, and *it is probable that the belief in the resurrection was not the only great debt which Jewish religionists owed to Zoroastrians.*" Is there, then, no likelihood of Jesus and His disciples being familiar with the ideas of sun-worshippers?

But, it will be urged, the teaching of Jesus Christ was opposed to Essenic doctrines in the matter of asceticism. True; but, in one way, this makes the case for the absorption of Essenic ideas all the stronger, for it would account for the strange fact that the Christians approved of asceticism in spite of their own Master's example to the contrary.

I do not wish to press this anti-Christian theory further than to say that it appears to me that, among others, it is one deserving of consideration. Presuming that in Jesus the Apostles were confronted with a personality of overwhelming attractiveness and power of appeal to themselves, their language can be interpreted throughout as their attempt to expound and pass on their experience to the world. In this attempt they were naturally driven to employ such conceptions as were current in their day, and notably those of Messianic anticipations and Greek philosophy. Assuming that the Gospels are without any important interpolations, and that the authors are the Evangelists, even then the partial insertion of solar-myths would not necessarily be tantamount to any conscious dishonesty on the part of the Evangelists; it only points to their impregnation with the Jewish beliefs, such as those of the Essenes, that were around them. If this theory be correct, the difficulty arising from the shortness of the time between the Resurrection and the writing of the Gospels vanishes, since accretions of a later date would no longer be the sole cause for the events recorded by the Evangelists becoming inextricably entwined with mythical beliefs.

ARGUMENT FROM MITHRAISM.

This argument is fully developed in Part III. of Mr. J. M. Robertson's book, *Pagan Christs*, from which the following are quotations: "Mithraism was in point of range the most nearly universal religion of the Western world in the early centuries of the Christian era. As to this students are agreed. [Here Mr. Robertson gives in a footnote a formidable array of authorities.] To the early Fathers, we shall see, Mithraism was a most serious thorn in the flesh; and the monumental remains of the Roman period, in almost all parts of the empire, show its extraordinary extension." Mr. Robertson points out that there are a number of monuments in honour of Mithra in England, France, Italy, Germany, and in many Mediterranean ports. He then proceeds to give us some exceedingly important information regarding Mithraism, out of

which I select the following extracts for the more particular attention of Christians:—

"We have the cultus of Mithra as the Sun-god, the deity of light and truth, created by, and yet co-equal with, the Supreme Deity, and fighting on the side of the good against the evil power, Angra-Mainyu (Ahriman)—this at a long period before the Christian era. .....Mithra comes to occupy a singular position as between the two great powers of good and evil, Ormuzd and Ahriman, being actually named the Mediator, and figuring to the devout eye as a humane and beneficent God, nearer to man than the Great Spirit of Good, a Saviour, a Redeemer, eternally young, son of the Most High, and preserver of mankind from the Evil One..... The first day of the week, Sunday, was apparently from time immemorial consecrated to Mithra by the Mithraists; and as the Sun-god was pre-eminently 'the Lord,' Sunday was the 'Lord's Day' long before the Christian era..... We have some exact information as to the two chief Mithraic ceremonies or festivals, those of Christmas and Easter, the winter solstice and the vernal equinox, the birthday of the Sun-god, and the period of his sacrifice and his triumph.....There were in antiquity, we know from Porphyry, several elaborate treatises setting forth the religion of Mithra; and every one of these has been destroyed by the care of the Church.....Of course, we are told that the Mithraic rites and mysteries are borrowed and imitated from Christianity. The refutation of this notion, as has been pointed out by M. Havet, lies in the language of those Christian fathers who spoke of Mithraism. Three of them, as we have seen, speak of the Mithraic resemblances to Christian rites as being the work of devils. Now, if the Mithraists *had* simply imitated the historic Christians, the obvious course for the latter would be simply to say so.....The Mithraic mysteries, then, of the burial and resurrection of the Lord, the Mediator, the Saviour; burial in a rock tomb and resurrection from the tomb; the sacrament of bread and water, the marking on the forehead with a mystic mark—all these were in practice before the publication of the Christian Gospel. .....Nor was this all. Fermicus informs us that the devil, in order to leave nothing undone for the destruction

of souls, had beforehand resorted to deceptive imitations of the *Cross* of Christ.....Still further does the parallel hold. It is well known that, whereas in the Gospels Jesus is said to have been born in an inn-stable, early Christian writers, as Justin Martyr and Origen, explicitly say he was born in a cave. Now, in the Mithra myth, Mithra is both rock-born and born in a cave; and the monuments show the new-born babe adored by shepherds who offer first-fruits. .....Now, however, arises the great question. How came such a cultus to die out of the Roman and Byzantine Empire after making its way so far, and holding its ground so long? The answer to that question has never, I think, been fully given, and is for the most part utterly evaded, though part of it has been suggested often enough. The truth is Mithraism was not overthrown; it was merely transformed.....Though Mithraism had many attractions, Christianity had more, having sedulously copied every one of its rivals, and developed special features of its own.....In the Christian legend the God was humanised in the most literal way; and for the multitude the concrete deity must needs replace the abstract. The Gospels gave a literal story: the Divine Man was a carpenter, and ate and drank with the poorest of the poor.....Gradually the very idea of allegory died out of the Christian intelligence; and priests as well as people came to take everything literally and concretely.....This was the religion for the Dark Ages.....Byzantines and barbarians alike were held by literalism, not by the unintelligible: for both alike the symbol had to become a fetish; and for the Dark Ages the symbol of the cross was much more plausibly appealing than that of the god slaying the zodiacal bull.....A Mithraist could turn to the Christian worship and find his main rights unimpaired, lightened only of the burden of initiative austerities, stripped of the old obscure mysticism, and with all things turned to the literal and the concrete, in sympathy with the waning of knowledge and philosophy throughout the world."

But I must now close these quotations, apologising to Mr. Robertson for making such a free use of his book, and advising my readers to study it. They will find that his facts are reliable; they are all backed by the highest authorities, however much the

conclusions drawn from them may, at present, be a matter of opinion. Suffice it to say here that the coincidences between Mithraism and Christianity are indescribably marvellous, and require further explanation, if Mr. Robertson's theory of the absorption of the former by the latter be not very largely true. Whatever the substratum of real history may be, there is no doubt that there was every opportunity for an early absorption of Mithraism, and every probability that it took place to an extent which throws a new flood of light upon many Christian doctrines. "The first six centuries were characterised by fierce controversies as to the most fundamental verities of the Christian faith, by the wholesale introduction of adult converts, who brought with them heathen and Jewish habits of thought, and who were in many cases of a low type of civilisation; and the adulteration of the Gospel was further facilitated by the purely nominal adhesion of persons anxious to stand well with the first Christian Emperors. The period was one of incessant fermentation and of rapid and continuous change." These are not the words of Mr. Robertson, or of any other freethinker, but are an extract from the resolution adopted by the Church Association in connection with the appeal by Dean Wace and others to the authority of the First Six Centuries. *What* a period to appeal to! When we know what we do of the credulity and the methods of those "Fathers" of the Church, how can any rational being place in them any confidence whatsoever?

What steps do the Churches propose to take concerning these revelations? Will they proclaim from the pulpit their new theory of a Progressive Revelation, or will they by their silence evince their own want of faith in this precious theory, and allow the storm of unbelief slowly to gather force until it bursts and overwhelms the Christian belief? Knowledge of the facts, so ably discussed by Mr. Robertson, will soon be widely disseminated. Let there be no mistake on this point. Here, for instance, are some instructive passages appearing on page 496 of the *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1905:—

"It has been truly observed that the recovery, only partial as it is, of the history of this religion is one of the most remarkable triumphs of historical and antiquarian

research. Originating in Persia, it was spread through the Roman Empire by poor and humble converts, who were at first mainly soldiers; but gradually, like Christianity, it permeated all ranks, and its temples are found scattered over the whole civilised world, from Babylon to the hills of Scotland. Just as the religion of Isis did, it resembled that of Christ in being a religion of inward holiness, of austere self-discipline and purity; but the details of its resemblance are incomparably more close and curious. The briefest sketch of the matter is all that can be attempted here. According to Mithraic theology, God considered in His totality is a Being so infinite and so transcendent that His direct connection with man and the universe is inconceivable. In order to become the father of man and creator, He manifested Himself in a second personality—namely, Mithra, who was in his cosmic character identified with the 'unconquered sun,' and, as a moral and intellectual Being, was the Divine Word or Reason, and, in more senses than one, 'the mediator' between man and the Most High. Life on earth, according to the Mithraic doctrine, is for man a time of trial. The Spirit of Evil, his adversary, is always seeking to destroy him—to crush him with pain and sorrow, or to stain his soul with concupiscence; but in all his struggles Mithra is at hand to aid him, and will at the last day be at once his judge and advocate, when the graves give up their dead, when the just are separated from the unjust, when the saved are welcomed like children into eternal bliss, and the lost are consumed in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. This Divine Saviour came into the world as an infant. His first worshippers were shepherds; and the day of His nativity was December 25th. His followers preached a severe and rigid morality, chief among their virtues being temperance, chastity, renunciation, and self-control. They kept the seventh day holy, and the middle day of each month was a special feast of Mithra, which symbolised his function of Mediator. They had seven sacraments, of which the most important were baptism, confirmation, and a Eucharistic supper, at which the communicants partook of the divine nature of Mithra under the species of bread and wine."

EVOLUTION

Chapter V.

IRRECONCILABLE DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH EVOLUTION

§ 1. *Preliminary Remarks.*

THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION.

General views of the development or evolution of the visible order of nature have been entertained by philosophers from the earliest historical times. There were pioneers of Evolution[1] from Thales to Lucretius (600 B.C.–50 A.D.). The inquiry was then arrested for nearly sixteen hundred years—that is, until the renascence of Science. As knowledge, in spite of ecclesiastical discouragement, again slowly advanced, the science of biology gained in strength, and the work of Linnæus, Buffon, Lamarck, Erasmus Darwin, and others, paved the way for that modern theory of Evolution which Darwin, Wallace, Spencer, Huxley, and Haeckel have demonstrated to us. This doctrine of Evolution[2] is no longer a mere speculative theory,

[1] For an interesting account of the "Pioneers of Evolution" see Mr. Clodd's book bearing that title.

[2] *Definitions of Evolution.*—Evolution shows how things have become what they are, and how they are being changed. The development of planetary bodies from nebular or gaseous matter, and the history of the development of an individual plant or animal, or of society, are examples of Evolution. "The processes everywhere in antagonism, everywhere gaining now a temporary and now an enduring predominance the one over the other, we call Evolution and Dissolution" (H. Spencer, *First Principles*, chap. xiii.). "Evolution

possibly or probably true, but an established fact accepted by the whole scientific world with hardly a single dissentient voice. We know that everything as it now exists is the product of Evolution—the solar system, the earth, all lower forms of life, and lastly man, together with his languages, arts, sciences, theology, social habits, instincts, and, according to many high authorities, morals, conscience, and consciousness. Yes, "man, perfect as he may appear to us, is still not a being apart in nature, but by his whole organisation is continuous with the other zoological species." "Anthropology, properly so-called, is, in fact, merely a chapter of zoology." "The homological structure of man, his embryological development, and the rudiments which he still retains, all declare in the plainest possible manner that he is descended from some lower form." He "derives his moral sense from the social feelings which are instinctive or innate in the lower animals."[1]

It is in the special sense of explaining how living things came into being, and how they have acquired their present characters, that the teaching of Evolution appears to be most in conflict with that of the Churches and the Bible. It is, therefore, this aspect

is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation" (*Ibid*, ch. xvii.). "The hypothesis of Evolution supposes that in all this vast progression there would be no breach of continuity, no point at which we could say, 'This is a natural process,' and 'This is not a natural process'" (Huxley, *Amer. Addresses*, p. 10). "Evolution, or development, is, in fact, at present employed in biology as a general name for the history of the steps by which any living being has acquired the morphological and the physiological characters which distinguish it" (Huxley, *Evolution in Biology*).

[1] Quoted from Darwin's *Descent of Man*.

of Evolution with which we are here chiefly concerned, and we may remember that, since Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871), his *main* conclusions have been confirmed by every branch of anthropological research—by palæontology, zoology, comparative anatomy, physiology, pathology, teratology, psychology, and more especially by embryology, a science in which there has been a remarkable progress during the past thirty years.[1]

DARWINISM.

To prevent the chance of any misunderstanding, some explanation may be necessary for the benefit of those who are not in touch with scientific thought, and who hear that "Darwinism" is out of date. They should understand that, although the doctrine of Evolution as applied to organic life used to be widely spoken of by the term "Darwinism," the latter is now

[1] Professor Haeckel points out on page 24 of his latest work, *The Evolution of Man* (translated by Joseph McCabe), that "even when human anatomy began to stir itself once more in the sixteenth century, and independent research into the structure of the developed body was resumed, anatomists did not dare to extend their inquiries to the unformed body, the embryo, and its development. There were many reasons for the prevailing horror of such studies. It is natural enough, when we remember that a Bull of Boniface VIII. excommunicated every man who ventured to dissect a human corpse. If the dissection of a developed body were a crime to be thus punished, how much more dreadful must it have seemed to deal with the embryonic body still enclosed in the womb, which the Creator Himself had decently veiled from the curiosity of the scientist." Palæontology is another very young science that has contributed greatly towards the evidence of our origin. Professor Huxley informs us, in his essay on "The Rise and Progress of Palæontology," that the first adequate investigation of the fossil remains of any large group of vertebrated animals dates from 1822, and that in the last fifty years the number of known fossil remains of invertebrated animals has been trebled or quadrupled. Fossils were at one time believed to have been sown by the devil, whose fell purpose was to throw discredit upon the Bible story of Creation. Perhaps this pious opinion may have had something to do with the slow progress of palæontology?

only used by scientists in a special sense to designate the belief in the gradual origin of species *by natural selection*. There are some who deem this hypothesis to be untenable. But there is no dispute whatever concerning the doctrine of the derivation or descent, with modification, of all existing species, genera, orders, classes, etc., of animals and plants, from a few simple forms of life, if not from one. Modern evolutionary theories, however, are more particularly concerned with the question of the ways and means by which living organisms have assumed their actual characters or forms, and on these points there are many shades of individual opinion.

Ignorance of the gist of the Darwinian theory, "natural selection,"[1] has been fruitful in misunderstandings and objections regarding it, so that it is advisable to mention here that the author of the theory states explicitly that it does not account for the origin of variations in individuals, still less in species; but that, given the origination and existence of variations, it shows that some of these are preserved while others are not—that favourable variations tend to be perpetuated, and unfavourable variations to become extinct; that those variations which best adapt an organisation to its environment are most favourable to its preservation, and, consequently, that the theory of natural selection is adequate to explain the observed fact of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. "Natural selection.....implies that the individuals which are best fitted for the complex and changing conditions to which, in the course of ages,

[1] "The preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations I call natural selection" (Darwin, *Origin of Species*, ed. 1860, iv.).

they are exposed, generally survive and procreate their kind."[1] Natural selection does not, it may be added, imply *conscious* selection. It would be equally true to call it natural murder, or natural weeding-out.[2] But, whether Darwin be right or wrong in attributing so much to natural selection,[3] what I wish particularly to point out is that the hypothesis of Evolution is nowise invalidated because, out of the various causes at work, we are not quite sure as yet which is the most efficient. It is necessary to make this clear, because, should the layman, hearing that "Darwinism" was under dispute, come to the conclusion that the animal origin of man was discredited, the priest would be the last to undeceive him.[4]

[1] Darwin, *Varieties of Animals and Plants*, xx., 178. Regarding *sexual* selection, Darwin writes: "For my own part, I conclude that of all the causes which have led to the differences in external appearance between the races of men, and to a certain extent between man and the lower animals, sexual selection has been by far the most efficient" (*Descent of Man*, ed. 1871, ii., 367).

[2] It is very necessary to understand exactly what the theory of natural selection is and is not; because protagonists of Faith, even when believing in Evolution, base some of their arguments on the alleged collapse of the Darwinian theory. Thus, in *Present-day Rationalism Critically Examined*, the Rev. Professor George Henslow affirms that, while the theory of Evolution stands on an impregnable basis, Haeckel's Monism and Rationalistic agnosticism are based on Darwin's doctrine of natural selection, and he enters upon an elaborate argument—covering sixty pages of his book—to show that the origin of species by means of natural selection is false, and that the primary cause of Evolution is the definite action of the environment, combined with the adaptive powers of the living organism. Such arguments, coming from a clergyman having scientific attainments, are likely to impress the average Christian reader and confuse the main issue. Natural selection *is* "the action of the environment," and, even if it were not, and if natural selection were not the primary cause, the doctrine of the action of environment will suit the Monist just as well.

[3] It is hardly necessary to mention that Weismann lays even more stress than Darwin on natural selection.

[4] The priest, as likely as not, will know very little about the matter; but even scientists who are advocates of the Christian cause are not always as candid as one would wish. While the Church cited Sir

THE AVERAGE PERSON'S IDEAS ON THE EVOLUTION OF MAN.

With but few exceptions,[1] every biological student admits our animal origin. The ideas of most people, however, on this subject are hazy in the extreme, and no wonder, when the study of Evolution has never been included in their school curriculum. Men (and in very rare cases women) pick up a few crumbs of knowledge concerning the scientific theory of their origin, and then, from want of leisure or from religious motives, or from various causes, they drop the subject. Often they are put off by the dry details of the evidence and the technical phrases before they have obtained a real grip of the subject. They do not even know some of the more simple and obvious proofs which alone would have sufficed to convince them. One finds that men's views concerning Evolution are coloured by the opinion prevailing at the time when they themselves were once faintly interested in the subject; and thus there is, at present, an inertia of ignorance, due to the misconceptions and prejudices of older generations. The opinions of our elders, being formed on a riper experience, very properly enlist our respect; but, unfortunately, in this instance they are

Richard Owen "as an authority against the Darwinian theory, especially in its application to man's descent, there remained in the memory of his brother savants his lack of candour in never withdrawing the statement made by him, and demonstrated by Huxley as untrue, that the *hippocampus minor* in the human brain is absent from the brain of the ape" (see p. 172 of Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*. See also remarks by Sir Charles Lyell, pp. 485 and 486 of his work, *Antiquity of Man*. On p. 290 he further tells us that "we may consider the attempt to distinguish the brain of man from that of the ape on the ground of newly-discovered cerebral characters, presenting differences in kind, as *virtually* abandoned by its originator").

[1] In this country, for instance, Dr. Beale, Dr. Dallinger, and Professor Henslow (the last two are clergymen) violently reject it. Dr. Wallace does not admit it for the *mind*.

based upon false premises, and so lead us astray. People who remember when Darwin first propounded his theory, and the violent, not to say virulent, opposition with which it was received by the Church, only too often remain in blissful ignorance of all that has since transpired. It is quite enough for them that they are erect, tailless, speaking, reflecting bipeds. With attributes such as these, they fondly imagine that they are separated from the beast by a gulf that neither Evolution nor any other theory could possibly bridge. Whatever the reasons may be—and there are many—the vast majority of Christians not only remain woefully ignorant of Evolution, but have no desire to learn anything more about it. They know it is opposed to Bible teaching. They prefer, as it has been well said, to consider themselves fallen angels rather than elevated apes.

We are not, however, concerned here with likes and dislikes, but only with the truth as far as our reason allows us to discover it. Moreover, if it be objected that we can take no pride in an animal ancestry, surely we may say the same of our savage ancestry. "He who has seen a savage in his native land will not feel much shame if forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flows in his veins. For my own part, I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey, who braved his dreaded enemy in order to save the life of his keeper; or from that old baboon, who, descending from the mountains, carried away in triumph his young comrade from a crowd of astonished dogs, as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practises infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted

by the grossest superstitions."[1] "We must acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man, with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men, but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect, which has penetrated into the movement and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."[2]

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH.

Now let us consider the opinions of our spiritual guides. At the Shrewsbury Church Conference, in 1896, Archbishop Temple said that, "in his opinion, the full acceptance of the doctrine of Evolution would prove a great help to Christian thought and Christian life." In his book, *The Relations between Religion and Science*, he states that "the doctrine of Evolution leaves the argument for an intelligent and beneficent Creator and Governor of the world stronger than it was before." Nearly a decade has passed, and still how few Christians know of this "help," of this "strong argument"!

In the course of his address at the Weymouth Church Conference this year, the Bishop of Gloucester admitted that "Darwin's teaching on evolution and development" had "revolutionised our ideas of God's action in nature." If this be so, how comes it that such a vast number of the pious still adhere to the old ideas? Is it not the duty of the pastor to educate his flock? What "ideas of God's action in nature" are missionaries even now putting into the heads of their

[1] Concluding remarks in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. [2] *Ibid.*

converts? If we inquired of the average religionist, should we find that his or her ideas had been revolutionised?

In a recently-published letter,[1] written by Charles Kingsley to a correspondent, we read: "My own belief in the general truth of my friend Darwin's views—which deepen day by day as I verify them—has only given me wider and deeper and nobler notions of God's work in the material universe." He then proceeds to illustrate his own thoughts by a charming little story of a certain old heathen Khan, who was delighted with the idea of a God so wise that *he made all things make themselves*. This old Khan and Charles Kingsley overlook an objection which to myself, and to many others, seems quite insuperable—namely, that a God so wise and merciful would have seen his way to prevent that frightful wastefulness and cruelty which is part and parcel of the evolutionary process. But more of this difficulty anon.

To give another example of a clerical evolutionist, the Rev. G. S. Streatfield, vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, on May 22nd, 1901, read a paper at the Southport Conference on "Questions that Must be Faced," in which he conceded that "the fact of Evolution is now hardly questioned in the scientific world—one might almost say in the world of thought." He, too, is charmed with the new theory, for he says: "It is, I suppose, generally agreed that the evolutionist has worthier, more rational, more truly philosophical views of the Divine Will and Action than those who hold the traditional theory." Clerics of

[1] Lent by Mr. Reginald Blunt to the Chelsea Public Library.

his stamp and school are now becoming more outspoken, and admit their convictions in public instead of in writings that are likely to be seen only by a select few. Only lately the Dean of Westminster, addressing a large gathering of Sunday-school teachers, told them that the idea that the human species was separately created was given up, and the fact of man's descent from lower organisms accepted. While admiring his candour, one cannot help calling to mind that in 1860 Professor Huxley was utterly ridiculed by erudite scholars of the Church for making a precisely similar statement.

Between those who accept and those who entirely reject Evolution there are various shades of opinion. There are those who accept everything short of the evolution of certain mental faculties; although students of comparative psychology now admit that the intellectual faculties of animals differ from those in man in degree only, not in their essence. There are those like the Rev. John Urquhart, author of a brochure called *Roger's Reasons*, who seek to reconcile the Bible story of creation with the Evolution theory, although any such interpretation was put out of court long ago by Professor Huxley's reply to Mr. Gladstone.[1] There are those who, like Dr. Torrey,[2] persist in altogether denying our animal

[1] See Professor Huxley's essays, "The Interpreters of Genesis and the Interpreters of Nature" and "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis," appearing in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1885, and February, 1886, respectively, and also in the collection of Huxley's essays entitled *Essays upon Some Controverted Questions*.

[2] Dr. Torrey informed a huge audience in the Albert Hall quite recently that he had given up the theory of Evolution for *scientific* reasons. "People speak of the missing link; why, they are all missing!" cried Dr. Torrey. Now, this is nothing more nor less than an untruth, and Dr. Torrey must know that it is, *if* he has studied

origin, although there is hardly a single scientist, hardly a single thoughtful man, who has studied the subject without bias, who believes anything else.

The number of clergymen who openly admit the truth of Evolution is as yet comparatively small. The few who do express their opinion openly, profess to be delighted with the new light that has now been shed upon God's methods. The question arises, How is it, then, that we hear so little about Evolution from the pulpit, and that, consequently, the faithful are kept in ignorance of this fresh revelation? The answer is obvious: It is because the advanced divines have yet to educate their congregations up to their way of thinking, and the process has, for many reasons, to be conducted with extreme caution. They know full well that they have a difficult and dangerous task before them; that those who accept Evolution, but are unable to accept their opinions concerning its spiritual helpfulness, will lapse into agnosticism. They also know that their views are not popular with conservative believers.

The chief reason, perhaps, for pulpit reticence is that the enormous majority in the Church still remain hostile to this new doctrine. They consider it to be dangerous, and likely to unsettle people's minds. Possibly in their inmost souls, if they have studied Evolution at all, they agree with a certain distinguished essayist who says: "A God who could have been deliberately guilty of them (the Evolutionary processes) would be a God too absurd, too monstrous, too

Evolution, as he assures us that he has. Here is an example of the way Christians are mis-informed by their spiritual teachers on the subject of Evolution. But what can you expect of an evangelist who thinks that he is serving God's cause by slandering the dead, as he did in the case of Colonel Ingersoll and Thomas Paine?

mad to be credible."[1] The cruelty of the law of prey and struggle for existence, and the wastefulness of Nature's arrangements for the reproduction of life (plant and animal alike), do, indeed, appear sufficient warrant for some such painful impression; while, as if this were not enough, there is for the Christian the additional difficulty of reconciling Evolution with the Bible story of the Creation and Fall of man. These various difficulties must now be carefully investigated.

§ 2. "*Nature Red in Tooth and Claw.*"

Darwin tells us that "there is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at such a high rate that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. Even slow-breeding man has doubled in twenty-five years, and at this rate in less than a thousand years there would literally not be standing room for his progeny."[2] [I commend this passage to the notice of President Roosevelt and others who are so anxious that we should obey God's command to Noah, and "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth."] "If all the offspring of the elephant, the slowest breeder known, survived, there would be, in seven hundred and fifty years, nearly nineteen million elephants, descended from the first pair. If the

[1] See Mr. W. H. Mallock's *Religion as a Credible Doctrine*, p. 177. In the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1905, Mr. Mallock contributes an article entitled "The Crux of Theism," in which he seeks to sweep aside the difficulties of Evolution, and argues forcibly, but not at all convincingly, that these subjects are irrelevant and only confuse the real issue—which is the relation of God to the individual soul. I am unable, and, what is of real importance, not one in a thousand would be able, to follow him. If the Eternal Energy be what we understand by the word "God," He *must* be perfect, and *must* love His own creations.

[2] *Origin of Species*, p. 65.

eight or nine million eggs which the roe of a cod is said to contain, developed into adult codfishes, the sea would quickly become a solid mass of them. It is the same with the plants. The lower organisms multiply with an astonishing rapidity, some minute fungi increasing a billion-fold in a few hours. But we need not give further examples of this fecundity whereby Nature, 'so careless of the single life,' secures the race against extinction. The result is obvious—a ceaseless struggle for food and place. In that struggle the race is to the swift, and the battle to the strong; the weaker, be it in brain or body, going to the wall; the vast majority never reaching maturity, or, if they do, attaining it only to be starved or slain. As among men competition is sharper between those of the same trade, so throughout the organic world the struggle is less severe between different species than between members of the same species, because these compete more fiercely for their common needs—plants for the same soil, carnivora for the same prey."[1]

The problem of evil has exercised the mind of man from all time, and has never yet been solved.[2] In our own time the solution *by theology* seems farther off than ever, now that the existence of the Devil is denied, while the law of prey and struggle for existence is admitted to be the Creator's own handiwork—to be His Divine plan for the evolution of all living things. Surely we must admit the inherent cruelty of the process? Professor Huxley, in an article on the "Struggle for Existence," concludes that, "since thousands of times a minute, were our ears sharp

[1] From *The Story of Creation*, by Edward Clodd. Chapter on "The Origin of Species," p. 95 of the cheap edition.

[2] There are further remarks upon this problem in Chap. VI., § 4.

enough, we should hear sighs and groans of pain like those heard by Dante at the gate of hell [not to mention what we should *not* hear—the anguish and terror borne in silence], the world cannot be governed by what we call benevolence."[1]

Winwood Reade, in his striking book, *The Martyrdom of Man*, says: "But it is when we open the Book of Nature, that book inscribed in blood and tears; it is when we study the laws regulating life, the laws productive of development, that we see plainly how illusive is this theory that God is Love. In all things there is cruel, profligate, and abandoned waste. Of all the animals that are born a few only can survive; and it is owing to this law that development takes place. The law of murder is the law of growth. Life is one long tragedy; creation is one great crime. Is it the law of a kind Creator that no animal shall rise to excellence except by being fatal to the life of others? It is useless to say that pain has its benevolence, that massacre has its mercy. Why is it so ordained that bad should be the raw material of good? Pain is not less pain because it is useful; murder is not less murder because it is conducive to development. *There is blood upon the hand still, and all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten it.*"[2]

Robert Blatchford (Nunquam), in his book, *God and My Neighbour*, which has caused no little stir of late in certain quarters, speaks to the same effect: "On land and in sea the animal creation chase and maim and slay and devour each other. The beautiful swallow on the wing devours the equally beautiful

[1] *The Nineteenth Century*, February, 1888, pp. 162, 163.
[2] Pp. 519–20.

gnat. The graceful flying fish, like a fair white bird, goes glancing above the blue magnificence of the tropical seas. His flight is one of terror; he is pursued by the ravenous dolphin. The ichneumon-fly lays eggs under the skin of the caterpillar. The eggs are hatched by the warmth of the caterpillar's blood. They produce a brood of larvæ which devour the caterpillar *alive*.....A germ flies from a stagnant pool, and the laughing child, its mother's darling, dies dreadfully of diphtheria. A tidal wave rolls landward, and twenty thousand human beings are drowned or crushed to death. A volcano bursts suddenly into eruption, and the beautiful city is a heap of ruins, and its inhabitants are charred or mangled corpses. And the Heavenly Father, who is Love and has power to save, makes no sign.....Only man helps man. Only man pities; only man *tries* to save."

"But," it may be said, "you are giving only the one side—the freethinker's side—of the question. What are the Christian evolutionist's replies to these terrible attacks upon our Heavenly Father?" You shall hear them, and judge for yourself whether they are likely to convince the multitude.

In the second chapter of his book on *Darwinism*, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace[1] lays himself out to say all

[1] Dr. Wallace rejects the idea of man's special creation "as being entirely unsupported by facts, as well as in the highest degree improbable," only he will not allow that natural selection explains the origin of man's spiritual and intellectual nature. "These," he argues, "must have had another origin, and for this origin we can only find an adequate cause in the unseen universe of the Spirit." But then, you see, Dr. Wallace contends (in his book on *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*) that Spiritualism, if true, furnishes such proofs of the existence of ethereal beings, and of their power to act on matter, as must revolutionise philosophy. This belief renders Dr. Wallace a biassed witness so soon as Evolution appears to destroy his spiritist theories.

that can be said, and a great deal that cannot reasonably be said, in extenuation of God's plan. He owns that, "to many persons, Nature appears calm, orderly, and peaceful. They see the birds singing in the trees, the insects hovering over the flowers, and all living things in the possession of health and in the enjoyment of a sunny existence. But they do not see, and hardly ever think of, the means by which this beauty and harmony and enjoyment is brought about. They do not see the constant and daily search after food, the failure to obtain which means weakness or death; the constant effort to escape enemies; the ever-recurring struggle against the forces of Nature. This daily and hourly struggle, this incessant warfare, is, nevertheless, the very means by which much of the beauty and harmony and enjoyment in Nature is produced, and also affords one of the most important elements in bringing about the origin of the species." After showing that the struggle for existence has proved a stumbling-block in the way of those who would fain believe in the all-wise and benevolent Ruler of the universe, he goes on to say that "all this is greatly exaggerated"; that "the supposed torments and miseries of animals have little real existence, but are the reflection of the imagined sensations of cultivated men and women under similar circumstances"; and that "the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is altogether insignificant." Space, and a consideration for a possibly impatient reader, prevent my wading through the paltry reasons he proceeds to bring forward in order to try and prove that pain is not pain, and that the less degree of pain suffered by an animal or a savage is an excuse for its infliction.

The Rev. Professor Flint's book on *Theism*[1] is much patronised by the Church as an apologetic book of the highest order. The Professor tries to show (p. 204) that, although the process of development involves privation, pain, and conflict, it is subservient to the noblest end, because the final result is, as he alleges, order and beauty. All the perfections of sentient creatures are, he owns, due to this painful process. "Through it the lion has gained its strength, the deer its speed, the dog its sagacity. The suffering which the conflict involves may indicate that God has made even animals for some higher end than happiness—that He cares for animals' perfection as well as for animals' enjoyment. The ends are eminently worthy of a Divine intelligence." The Professor does *not* explain why, to paraphrase one of Mr. Lowes Dickenson's sage remarks, the less perfectly evolved generations should be sacrificed in order that future generations may be heirs of an unearned increment. Myself, I fail to see that even the ends, whatever they may happen to be—and they appear distinctly nebulous—can ever justify the cruel means; and I feel sure that our dumb fellow-creatures, the principal parties concerned, would agree with me, had they the power of reflection and speech. How can they, how can we, profess to approve of a plan that brings only unhappiness in its train? Suppose it were necessary in order to give more happiness in an after-life, the creature might meekly wonder why he or she had first to suffer pain, but could imagine, as the pious imagine, that it must be for some good purpose. Does Dr. Flint mean

[1] *Theism*, by the Rev. Robert Flint, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Moral Philosophy, Divinity, etc., being the Baird Lectures for 1877.

to say that there is an after-life for all living things? The learned Professor tries to explain pain away by describing its preservative use. He says (p. 246): "Were animals insusceptible of pain, they would be in continual peril." That would certainly spoil the evolutionary Creator's plans; but it hardly excuses His methods. Professor Flint, however, argues that, though pain is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, and "its end is a benevolent one." How, I ask, does it profit the creature itself to become ever so graceful in appearance, ever so perfect in mind and body, if it is only to gratify its Maker, who has an end in view with which it is in no wise itself concerned, and to attain which infinite pain has to be endured? Which would you or I rather be—lovely and unhappy, or ugly and happy?

There is another of these attempts to relieve doubt which I should like to bring to notice. A little book, entitled *In Relief of Doubt*, by the Rev. E. Welsh, is highly recommended by the Bishop of London, and is especially quoted from by Dr. Warschauer (on p. 39 of his own work, *Anti-Nunquam*), when refuting Mr. Blatchford's remarks (above quoted) on the cruelty of Nature. Dr. Warschauer selects the passage where Mr. Welsh says (p. 103): "We probably overstate the actual anguish of the lower creatures, imagining that they are bundles of sensitive nerves and quick brains like our own, and that they therefore have our sensibility to pain. A trodden worm writhes, and we credit it with all the pain that the foot of a Brobdingnag [*sic*] would inflict on a delicate child under his heel." Now, I am quite sure we credit no such thing. If we did, we, and especially the Izaak Waltons among us, would be perfect monsters of cruelty. Mark, too,

how Dr. Warschauer carefully selects for his illustration a *worm*—one of the lowly organised invertebrates! I may mention that his book was particularly recommended to me by a well-read cleric, who thought that it was an admirable and complete refutation of Mr. Blatchford's arguments. Dr. Warschauer will hardly advance his cause by transparently omitting all mention of the higher animals, or of that bundle of nerves called man.

Nor will the average man agree with Professor Wallace that "*it is difficult even to imagine a system by which a greater balance of happiness could have been secured.*" Was it, for example, impossible for God to have decreed that sentient life should feed only on non-sentient life? Could He not have brought about development without all this terrible struggle? One would think that Messrs. Warschauer and Wallace must not only have had a particularly good time themselves in this world, but must have purposely shut their eyes to the misery all round them. If they had to change places with a wounded Russian or Japanese writhing in agony on the battlefield, I wonder whether their optimism would stand the test? The bravest of us shudder at the idea of being buried alive, and yet this was just the very fate of many a poor fellow in that truly terrible war. Not that *man* did not do his utmost. "One by one the dead and injured were carefully and tenderly taken out," relates an eye-witness, "and many a tear was shed by strong men at the terrible sights we had to witness. The worst part of our work was to have to endure the agonising cries of the men who were suffering terrible torture; but everyone helped so willingly that we felt that we were not doing enough." Please note, on the one hand,

the cruel torture, and, on the other, the sympathy of *man*.

I will not weary or distress you further, gentle reader, with harrowing details of the pain that is endured alike by man and beast. It is all so well known. I will only ask you to listen to a little story from the leaves of a naturalist's note-book, and to put to yourself a few questions. "A sparrow-hawk suddenly dashed under the branches of a hedgerow oak, and seized a linnet. But the bird of prey had not calculated upon the missel-thrush whose nest was in the oak, and who made it his business to have no suspicious strangers loitering in the neighbourhood. With an angry 'jarr,' and a swoop that would have done credit to the hawk himself, the plucky missel-thrush was upon the marauder almost at the same instant that the linnet was seized; a feather—a hawk's feather—floated in the air, and the astonished bird of prey flung himself sideways, and spread his talons to meet the next assault. This action released the linnet, who sped away into the next parish like a bullet, while the missel-thrush, perched in the oak tree again, noisily threatened to repeat the attack. So the sparrow-hawk departed in the opposite direction to the linnet, and in two minutes all birddom was twittering and squabbling as before on the site of what was so very nearly a sudden tragedy." Is not your sympathy, humane reader, all with the linnet and its gallant rescuer, although the hawk was but carrying out the behests of its Maker! Does it not give us a thrill of pleasure when the lion is baulked of his prey—when the pet lamb is rescued from the butcher? Are we, then, more merciful than God? Was it Jesus or was it the gentle Gautama that marked

"How lizard fed on ant, and snake on him,
And kite on both; and how the fish-hawk robbed
The fish-tiger of that which it had seized;
The shrike chasing the bulbul, which did hunt
The jewelled butterflies; till everywhere
Each slew a slayer, and in turn was slain,
Life living upon death. So the fair show,
Veiled one vast, savage, grim conspiracy
Of mutual murder, from the worm to man,
Who himself kills his fellow" [1]?

§ 3. *The Bible Account of Creation Irreconcilable with Science in Each and Every Respect.*

The hypothesis respecting the past history of Nature, which was formerly, and is still very largely, accepted by Christians, is the doctrine fully and clearly stated in the immortal poem of John Milton—the English Divina Commedia—*Paradise Lost*. There is the best of reasons for the popularity of this doctrine. It agrees literally with the plain words of the Bible. The hypothesis is briefly this: "That this visible universe of ours came into existence at no great distance of time from the present, and that the parts of which it is composed made their appearance, in a certain definite order, in the space of six natural days, in such a manner that on the first of these days light appeared; that on the second the firmament or sky separated the waters above from the waters beneath the firmament; that on the third day the waters drew away from the dry land, and upon it a varied vegetable life, similar to that which now exists, made its appearance; that the fourth day was signalised by the apparition of the sun, the stars, the moon, and the planets; that on the fifth day aquatic animals originated within

[1] *The Light of Asia*, Book the First.

the waters; that on the sixth day the earth gave rise to our four-footed terrestrial creatures, and to all variations of terrestrial animals except birds, which had appeared on the preceding day; and, finally, that man appeared upon the earth, and the emergence of the universe from chaos was finished."[1] This interpretation is that which has been instilled into most of us in our childhood; but, "if we are to listen to many expositors of no mean authority, we must believe that what seems so clearly defined in Genesis—as if very great pains had been taken that there should be no possibility of mistake—is not the meaning of the text at all. The account is divided into periods that we may make just as long or as short as convenience requires. We are also to understand that it is consistent with the original text to believe that the most complex plants and animals may have been evolved by natural processes, lasting for millions of years, out of structureless rudiments. A person who is not a Hebrew scholar can only stand aside and admire the marvellous flexibility of a language which admits of such diverse interpretations."[2]

Furthermore, we are to understand that there is no disagreement between theology and science in the *sequence* of the six acts of creation. Here at least we are not asked to twist words round so that one may mean a million. We have a definite statement which science either supports, or it does not. The reader who knows that the verdict of science is negative may ask: "What is the use of wasting my time over a Christian argument which has long since been exploded?" I crave his pardon and patience; but,

[1] Quoted from Huxley's *Lectures on Evolution.* [2] *Ibid.*

however true it may be that Mr. Gladstone's position was shown to be untenable, it is equally true that an enormous number of persons still persist in maintaining that there is a remarkable coincidence of the Pentateuchal story with the result of modern investigation, and that science supports them in this conclusion. The Very Rev. Henry Wace, D.D., Dean of Canterbury, in his address before the Christian Association of University College, London, on May 7th, 1903, reminded his hearers that a President of the British Association (Sir William Dawson) had stated that "it would not be easy even now to construct a statement of the development of the world in popular terms so concise and so accurate" as the first chapter of Genesis. And Dr. Wace asks: "From whence could have come this marvellous approximation, to say the least, to the facts which science has been slowly revealing but from the Divine wisdom which alone was cognisant of them, and could alone make them known to mankind?"[1]

A short time ago a lady very kindly sent me a little pamphlet, entitled *Roger's Reasons; or, The Bible and Science*, written by the Rev. John Urquhart. In this there is a resurrection pie of the old, old arguments, dished up again in such a guise as to take in the unwary and ill-informed, who would have no suspicion that the food thus given them for their reflection was not only stale, but had been condemned as unfit for mental consumption by the whole of the scientific faculty. The lady above mentioned

[1] These remarks were followed by the extraordinary statement that "there is no good reason whatever for supposing that the narratives in this chapter were derived from those Babylonian sources" (see p. 32 of *Christian Apologetics*, John Murray, where this address appears, among a series of others).

considered the reasoning perfectly convincing, and so possibly would ninety-nine Christian ladies out of a hundred. Mr. Urquhart is now much in evidence as a Christian apologist, and his pamphlet is being distributed broadcast (81,000 have been issued), so that it does seem worth while taking some notice of the attempts that are still being made to treat the Creation myth as a Divine revelation.[1] That modern science

[1] "Roger" (Mr. Urquhart) comes down very hard on the objection that, according to Genesis, light was created before, and seemingly without, the sun. He ridicules the notion that light is dependent upon the sun, and tells his interlocutors that "it is they, and not the Bible, who are behind the times." Science, however, teaches distinctly enough that the sun has existed at least as long as the earth [that the sun was then a nebula, or something intermediate, does not affect the question], and that all the light which the earth has enjoyed, with the exception of the small quantity derived from the fixed stars, has come from the sun. Mr. Urquhart endeavours to evade the force of the arguments in favour of the antiquity of man by pointing to discrepancies in the scientific estimates of the date of the glacial epoch, and he observes that "man's arrival was preceded by the great ice age." But the most moderate computation places the close of the glacial period 10,000 years ago, and fixes the duration of the reign of ice and snow at 25,000 years. There is clear evidence that man existed during the ice age, and it is probable (almost certain) that he existed before it. Mr. Urquhart also affirms his belief in the literal truth of the story of a universal deluge as recorded in Genesis. To the fatal objection that "there is not as much water in all the seas as would cover the whole earth," he replies that "in some parts the sea is six miles deep," and that, "*if the surface of the earth were made level*, there is as much water in the seas as would cover the whole earth at one and the same time to a depth of two miles." But, according to Genesis, the surface of the earth—that is, the bed of the ocean and the surface of the continents—was not made level. The waters prevailed upward until all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. One of these hills was Mount Everest, which is over five miles high; and another of them, on which the Ark ultimately rested, was Mount Ararat, over three miles high. We cannot allow Mr. Urquhart to empty the ocean in order to submerge the highest mountains, and the story of a universal deluge remains incredible on the ground that such a catastrophe would require eight times as much water as exists on our planet. It is more than doubtful whether Sir Henry Howarth's theory of a great and widespread deluge in palæolithic times is well founded [as a matter of fact, it is hopelessly abandoned]; but, even if true, this theory does not help the Noachian story, because geology clearly proves that no such event has taken

does not support either the interpretation put upon the Bible story of the Creation by Mr. Urquhart or by Mr. Gladstone, or by anyone else, or any interpretation which is compatible with the general sense of the narrative, can be ascertained by anyone who will read Professor Huxley's essays, "The Interpreters of Genesis" and "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis." A few quotations from these essays may enable the reader to form a slight idea of the decisive manner in which the assertion that modern science supports the Bible narrative is controverted by science herself.

Speaking of Mr. Gladstone's contention that the statements in the first two verses of Genesis are supported by the nebular hypothesis, Professor Huxley remarks: "But science knows nothing of any stage in which the universe could be said, in other than a metaphorical and popular sense, to be formless or empty; or in any respect less the seat of law and order than it is now. One might as well talk of a fresh-laid hen's egg being 'without form and void' because the chick therein is potential and not actual, as apply such terms to the nebulous mass which contains a potential solar system."

In a note at the end of the second essay, "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis," there is an excellent exposition of the "Proper Sense of the 'Mosaic' Narrative of the Creation." Among other points, Huxley, of course, notices how the stars are, as it were, thrown in—"He made the stars also." These words have always

place during the last 15,000 years. This is the kind of stuff—inaccurate, illogical, and deficient in common sense—which is circulated as a triumphant vindication of the entire and eternal truth of the Bible! (These replies to Mr. Urquhart are taken from the *Literary Guide* for September, 1904, art. "The Bible and Science," by W. B. Columbine.)

struck me as making it peculiarly clear that the "Mosaic" narrative originated from man, and not from God. The unknown authors of the Hexateuchal compilation were almost as ignorant of the nature of the stars and of their unthinkable distance away from us as a camel-driver in Sind, who gravely informed a friend of mine that the stars were once quite close to the earth, until one fine day a certain woman (it is always the *woman* who causes the mischief) grabbed hold of one and used it for cleaning her child, whereupon the gods, much annoyed at such presumption on the part of mankind, moved them far enough off to be safe from further desecration.

That the order of Creation as given in the Bible cannot be maintained will be clearly seen if we take the particular case of the birds and creeping things. Science does not affirm that the birds were made before "everything that creepeth upon the earth." Mr. Gladstone tries to get over the difficulty by excluding reptiles, lizards, etc., from the category of creeping things. This will appear in the course of the following quotations from Professor Huxley's essay on "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis":—

"Mr. Gladstone's views as to the proper method of dealing with grave and difficult scientific and religious problems had permitted him to base a solemn 'plea for a revelation of truth from God' upon an error as to a matter of fact, from which the intelligent perusal of a manual of palæontology would have saved him.....He does, indeed, make a great parade of authorities, and I have the greatest respect for those authorities whom Mr. Gladstone mentions. If he will get them to sign a joint memorial to the effect that our present palæontological evidence proves that birds appeared before the 'land

population ' of terrestrial reptiles, I shall think it my duty to reconsider my position—but not till then..... I have every respect for the singer of the Song of the Three Children (whoever he may have been); I desire to cast no shadow of doubt upon, but, on the contrary, marvel at, the exactness of Mr. Gladstone's information as to the considerations which 'affected the method of the Mosaic writer'; nor do I venture to doubt that the inconvenient intrusion of these contemptible reptiles—'a family fallen from greatness,' a miserable, decayed aristocracy reduced to mere 'skulkers about the earth,' in consequence, apparently, of difficulties about the occupation of land arising out of the earth-hunger of their former serfs, the mammals —into an apologetic argument, which would otherwise run quite smoothly, is in every way to be deprecated. Still, the wretched creatures stand there, importunately demanding notice; and, however different may be the practice in that contentious atmosphere with which Mr. Gladstone expresses and laments his familiarity, in the atmosphere of science it really is of no avail whatever to shut one's eyes to facts, or to try and bury them out of sight under a tumulus of rhetoric.....However reprehensible, and, indeed, contemptible, terrestrial reptiles may be, the only question which appears to me to be relevant to my argument is whether these creatures are or are not comprised under the denomination of 'everything that creepeth upon the ground.'.....Hence I commend the following extract from the eleventh chapter of Leviticus to Mr. Gladstone's serious attention :—

And these are they which are unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the weasel, and the mouse, and the great lizard after its kind, and the gecko, and the land-crocodile,

and the sand-lizard, and the chameleon. These are they which are unclean to you among all that creep (v. 29–31).

The merest Sunday-school exegesis, therefore, suffices to prove that, when the Mosaic writer in Genesis i. 24 speaks of 'creeping things,' he means to include lizards among them. This being so, it is agreed on all hands that terrestrial lizards and other reptiles allied to lizards occur in the Permian strata. It is further agreed that the Triassic strata were deposited after these. Moreover, it is well known that, even if certain footprints are to be taken as unquestionable evidence of the existence of birds, they are not known to occur in rocks earlier than the Trias, while indubitable remains of birds are not to be met with till much later. Hence it follows that natural science does not 'affirm' the statement that birds were made on the fifth day, and 'everything that creepeth on the ground' on the sixth, on which Mr. Gladstone rests his order; for, as is shown by Leviticus, the 'Mosaic writer' includes lizards among his creeping things."[1]

The crust of the earth is a book having for its pages strata that have, fortunately, been upturned for our perusal, and the story it tells us must be true. The series of fossiliferous deposits which contain the remains of the animals which have lived on the earth in past ages of its history afford the evidence required concerning the order of appearance of the different species. As Professor Huxley says elsewhere[2]: "When we consider these simple facts, we see how absolutely futile are the attempts that have been made to draw a parallel between the story told by so much of the crust of the earth as is known to us and the

[1] *Controverted Questions*, pp. 100, 102, 103, 104.
[2] In *Lectures on Evolution.*

story which Milton tells." Still, the story which Milton tells is the story which the Bible tells, to those who are not given to playing conjuring tricks with the plain meaning of words.

Finally, we must remember that "hundreds of thousands of animal species, as distinct as those which now compose our water, land, and air populations, have come into existence and died out again." "If the species of animals have all been separately created, then it follows that hundreds of thousands of acts of creative energy have occurred, at intervals throughout the whole time recorded by the fossiliferous rocks; and, during the greater part of that time, the 'creation' of the members of the water, land, and air populations must have gone on contemporaneously."[1]

The common-sense view of the Creation story, and one that is now widely accepted even by orthodox Christians, is that it is a myth. Many of us will, therefore, agree with Professor Huxley when he says: "I suppose it to be an hypothesis respecting the origin of the universe which some ancient thinker found himself able to reconcile with his knowledge, or what he thought was knowledge, of the nature of things, and therefore assumed to be true. As such, I hold it to be not merely an interesting, but a venerable, monument of a stage in the mental progress of mankind; and I find it difficult to suppose that any one who is acquainted with the cosmogonies of other nations—and especially with those of the Egyptians and the Babylonians, with whom the Israelites were in such frequent and intimate communication—should

[1] Quoted from "The Interpreters of Genesis," in the essays on *Controverted Questions*, p. 91.

consider it to possess either more or less scientific importance than may be allotted to these."[1]

It may not be inappropriate to conclude this section with Milton's conception of the last act of creation, so charmingly simple and so strictly according to the Bible and what Christ Himself believed, and yet so completely untrue :—

> The sixth, and of creation last, arose
> With ev'ning harps and matin, when God said,
> Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind:
> Cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
> Each in their kind. The earth obey'd, and straight
> Op'ning her fertile womb teem'd at a birth
> Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
> Limb'd and full grown.....
>
> There waited yet the master-work, the end
> Of all yet done; a creature who, not prone
> And brute as other creatures, but indu'd
> With sanctity of reason, might erect
> His stature, and upright with front serene
> Govern the rest, self knowing:....
>
> ....Therefore the omnipotent
> Eternal Father—for where is not he
> Present?—thus to his Son audibly spake:
> Let us make now man in our image, man
> In our similitude, and let them rule
> Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
> Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
> And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.
> Thus said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man,
> Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd
> The breath of life: in his own image he
> Created thee, in the image of God
> Express, and thou becam'st a living soul.
>
> —*Paradise Lost*, Book VII., 449–456, 505–510, 516–528.

[1] "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis," pp. 112–8 of *Controverted Questions*.

§ 4. *Proofs of Our Animal Origin.*

The third and last of the Evolution stumbling-blocks is that connected with the dogma of the Fall and Atonement. Before considering this, it will be better, I think, to summarise as briefly and simply as possible some of the chief proofs of our animal origin. The well-informed can skip this section, which is intended for the benefit of that vast majority —the ill-informed. Space will not permit me to do much more than allude to the proofs; but anyone really desirous of convincing himself or herself of the truth of the doctrine, and at the same time wishing to avoid details that might possibly prove wearisome, will find it popularly treated in Huxley's work on *Man's Place in Nature* (Macmillan); in Dennis Hird's *An Easy Outline of Evolution* (Watts & Co.; 2s. 6d.); in Edward Clodd's *The Story of Creation* (Watts & Co.; 6d.), in S. Laing's *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (Watts & Co.; 6d.); in Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* (Watts & Co.; 6d.), though this can hardly, perhaps, be described as popular; and in Metchnikoff's *The Nature of Man* (Heinemann, 1903; 12s. 6d.). The most recent and most complete work on the subject is Haeckel's *The Evolution of Man* (Watts & Co., 1905; 42s.). This is in two volumes, copiously illustrated, of which the first is entirely devoted to human embryology or ontogeny, a branch of science which furnishes the most overwhelming evidence.

The proofs may, roughly speaking, be grouped under three heads—the extraordinary affinity of bodily structure, the revelations of embryology, and the tale told by the useless rudimentary organs. We will commence with

THE EXTRAORDINARY AFFINITY OF BODILY STRUCTURE.

"It is notorious that man is constructed on the same general type or model with other mammals. All the bones in his skeleton can be compared with corresponding bones in a monkey, bat, or seal. So it is with his muscles, nerves, blood-vessels, and viscera. The brain, the most important of all the organs, follows the same law, as shown by Huxley and other anatomists."[1] Man's nearest animal relations are the tailless anthropoid or man-like apes—namely, the gorilla, the chimpanzee, the orang, and the gibbon. "Now that all the details of the human organisation have been studied, and the anatomical structures of man and large monkeys without tails have been compared, bone with bone, and muscle with muscle, a truly astonishing analogy between these organisms is made manifest—an analogy apparent in every detail."[2] The following are some of the points more particularly calling for notice:—

Dentition.—In the natural history of mammals the teeth play an important part as a means of determining differences and relationships. "Everyone knows the *milk teeth* and the *permanent teeth* of man. The anthropoid apes bear in this respect an astonishing likeness to man. The number (thirty-two in the adult), the form and general arrangement of the crown, are identical in man and anthropoid apes. The differences are to be found only in minor details."[3] "But the fact must not be lost sight of that all these differences are less pronounced than those which exist

[1] *The Descent of Man*, p. 10.
[2] *The Nature of Man*, by Metchnikoff, p. 41.
[3] *The Descent of Man*, p. 10.

between the dentition of anthropoid apes and that of all other monkeys."[1]

The Foot.—Anti-evolutionists have laid great stress on the difference between the foot of a man and of an anthropoid ape. But it is clearly shown by Huxley that in all essential respects the hinder limb of the gorilla terminates in as true a foot as that of man,[2] and "that, be the differences between the hand and foot of man and those of the gorilla what they may, the differences between those of the gorilla and those of the lower apes are much greater."[3]

The Sacrum.—"In monkeys, as a whole, the sacrum is composed of three, or rarely four, vertebræ, while in anthropoid apes it contains five—that is to say, just as many as in man."[4]

The Skull.—Here the differences are most marked; but again we must remind ourselves that, as regards the osteology, Professor Huxley tells us that "for the skull, no less than for the skeleton in general, the proposition holds good that the differences between man and the gorilla are of smaller value than those between the gorilla and some other apes."[5]

The Brain.—Several distinguished zoologists at one time insisted on the absence in all monkeys of certain parts of the brain peculiarly characteristic of man, but now it is unanimously accepted that the parts of the brain in question are "precisely those structures which are the most marked cerebral characters common to man with the apes. They are among the most distinctly simian peculiarities which the human organism exhibits."[6]

[1] *The Nature of Man*, p. 42.
[2] *Man's Place in Nature*, p. 126.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 127.
[4] *The Nature of Man*, p. 42.
[5] *Man's Place in Nature*, p. 111.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 139.

The difference between the brain of the orang and that of man is a mere difference of degree, and not of kind; and most students of comparative psychology now admit that the intellectual faculties of animals differ from those in man in degree only, not in their essence. Replying to his opponents, Professor Huxley compares the brain of man and of ape with two watches, one of which will, and the other will not, keep accurate time. He exclaims: "A hair in the balance-wheel, a little rust on a pinion, a bend in a tooth of the escapement, a something so slight that only the practised eye of the watchmaker can discover it, may be the source of all the difference."[1]

The late Sir Charles Lyell mentions in his *Antiquity of Man* how Dr. Sumner, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, brought out in strong relief fifty years ago, in his *Records of Creation*, one essential character separating man from the brute. As the same argument is still being "brought out," and is, on the face of it, exceedingly plausible, and as the answer to it has to do with the brain, it cannot be passed over. Dr. Sumner said: "It has been sometimes alleged, and may be founded on fact, that there is less difference between the highest brute animal and the lowest savage than between the savage and the most improved man. But, in order to warrant the pretended analogy, it ought to be also true that this lowest savage is no more capable of improvement than the chimpanzee or orang-outang." This objection is met by some such consideration as the following:—When you examine the enormous difference in the formation of the skull

[1] *Man's Place in Nature*, p. 102, *note*.

in man and ape (look, for instance, at plate xvii., vol. ii. of Haeckel's *Evolution of Man*), and when you remember that this sets hard at an early date, you surely have a good reason for limited improvability. Further, the brain of even the lowest savage represents a development of some half a million years above the ape along the line of intelligence. How, then, can we dream of making this up in one or a few generations by artificial training of the ape? Lastly, we have the enormous leverage of language, the inherited wealth of thousands of speaking generations, and an incalculable aid to thought. Our experiments do not show that the ape is not improvable, but only that we cannot, in a single generation, lift it over a gulf representing 500,000 years of human development. How can we expect it?

The Blood.—In the last few years an astonishing confirmation of our relationship to the anthropoid ape has been discovered. We are *blood relations*. Elie Metchnikoff, Professor at the Pasteur Institute, shows this clearly in his book, *The Nature of Man*.[1] Until quite recently it was not known how to distinguish human blood from that of other mammals. A method giving conclusive results has now been discovered, and is used in forensic medicine. The same method has been employed in comparing the blood of man and the anthropoid apes, resulting in the discovery[2] that, in their case, there is practically no blood difference whatever!

[1] Pp. 49–54. At the late International Congress on Tuberculosis, Professor Behring paid the highest tribute to Metchnikoff's labours on phagocyticis. Strange indeed are the instruments chosen by God for conferring His benefits on mankind; for the author of *The Nature of Man* denies His existence!

[2] Described in the *Lancet*, January 18th, 1902.

THE REVELATIONS OF EMBRYOLOGY.

"When Huxley wrote, the embryological history of anthropoid apes was practically unknown. Darwin, Vogt, and Haeckel, in their attempts to support the theory of the animal origin of man, had not sufficient knowledge of the embryology of monkeys. It is only recently that important work on this subject has been published.....The placenta often gives information of great importance in the classification of mammals. It is sufficient to glance at the zonary placenta of dogs and seals to be convinced of the relationship of these two species, which at first sight seem so different. Now, the placentas of all the anthropoid apes examined up to the present are of the same discoid type as that of man. The arrangement of the umbilical cord of man, which was formerly considered as quite peculiar to him, is found in anthropoid apes, as has been established by Deniker and Selenka. It is striking that the anthropoids resemble man rather than the lower monkeys in the relation of the fœtus to the fœtal membranes. With regard to the embryos themselves, the similarity between those of monkeys and man is very great.....The youngest stages of human development that have been obtained can hardly be distinguished from those of the lower monkeys either in position or shape. More advanced stages exhibit greater differentiation, and the later embryos of man resemble those of anthropoids much more closely than those of the lower monkeys. The resemblance between the nearly mature fœtus of anthropoids and human embryos of about the sixth month is evident enough."[1]

[1] *The Nature of Man*, pp. 45–48. In *The Riddle of the Universe* Haeckel reminds us that the opponents of Evolution used to appeal to

We are thus bound, in all honesty, to own up to our ape-like progenitors. But this is only a small portion of the wonderful tale told by Embryology. "Man is developed from an ovule about 125th of an inch in diameter, which differs in no respect from the ovules of other animals,"[1] and, marvellous to relate, from that stage upwards the embryo is one continuous epitome of the history of man's evolution from lower forms of life. Up to a certain point the germs, not only of all mammals, but of all vertebrate animals, fishes, reptiles, and birds, are scarcely distinguishable.[2] At the more advanced stage, where the embryo has already passed the reptilian form, we find that for a considerable time the line of development remains the same as that of other mammalia. The resemblance, for example, after the first four weeks' growth, between the embryo of a man and a dog is such that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the one from the other. Even at the age of eight weeks the embryo man is an animal with a tail, hardly to be distinguished from an embryo puppy.[3] After this period the embryo emerges from the general mammalian type into the special order of

the special features of human embryology, which were supposed to distinguish man from all the other mammals; but in 1890 Emil Selenka proved that the same features are found in anthropoid apes, especially in the orang, while the lower apes are without them.

[1] *The Descent of Man*, vol. i., p. 14. According to the latest authorities, however, the human ovum (when mature) differs in many respects from other (especially non-mammal) ova.

[2] A sceptic may convince himself by studying the plates given in Haeckel's *The Evolution of Man*, and especially plates ix. to xiv., where the embryos of various animals are compared.

[3] "It is," says Professor Huxley (in *Man's Place in Nature*, 1863, p. 67, and quoted by Darwin in his *Descent of Man*, p. 14), "quite in the later steps of development that the young human being presents marked differences from the young ape, while the latter departs as much from the dog in its developments as the man does. Startling as this last assertion may appear to be, it is demonstrably true."

primates to which man belongs. Thus does the growth of the egg from which man springs compress into a few weeks the results of millions of years, and set before us the history of his development from fish-like and reptilian forms (which we have seen, p. 211, Mr. Gladstone deemed so contemptible and "fallen from greatness"), and of his more immediate descent from a hairy tailed quadruped, the extinct common ancestor of man and monkey.[1] As evolution proceeds the embryo rises up to man, and the differences specialising the human infant at its birth, such as the largeness and more complex convolutions of the brain, become more and more accentuated as its growth proceeds.

Regarding the question of "gaps," we have to bear in mind that it is part of the evolutionary theory that the active processes of evolution have very largely ceased, that existing forms are but a surviving remnant with enormous gaps, and that the survivors are so fitted at present to their surroundings that evolutionary forces are causative of equilibrium rather than change. We have already seen, too, that in the struggle for existence it is among the closely-allied species that the contest is more strenuous, and that the weakest, or least fitted to survive, has to go to the wall—to be wiped out. Thus it is that there is a tendency for species to become extinct, and for the gaps to be widened. The extraordinary thing is not that we have so little direct evidence of descent, but that we have so much. That there are not more links

[1] These remarks on our embryonic development are largely taken from the popular accounts given by Messrs. Clodd and S. Laing in *The Story of Creation* and *Modern Science and Modern Thought* respectively.

missing[1] is due principally to the discovery of fossil remains. When an animal dies, the probabilities are, of course, enormously against geological preservation of its bones. Yet the gaps are continually being filled up by geological finds, and, though the remaining gaps may be great, they are not unaccountable.

I must now pass on to the remaining set of proofs of our origin.

THE TALE TOLD BY THE USELESS RUDIMENTARY ORGANS.

Perhaps nothing furnishes a more conclusive proof of our animal origin than the study of rudimentary structures—muscles, sense-organs, hair, bones, reproductive organs, etc. There are some which are "either absolutely useless, such as the mammæ of the male quadrupeds or the incisor teeth of ruminants which never cut through the gums; or they are of

[1] The duck-bill, a four-footed animal which lays eggs, is an important link between reptiles and mammals. Cuvier, the celebrated French naturalist, a persistent opponent of the evolutionary doctrines advanced by Lamarck and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, did not believe it possible that any four-footed animal could have eggs, and it was not till long after his time, and, indeed, only quite lately, that the statements of the natives were verified, and the eggs of the duck-bill actually found. Again, another missing link between man and his more immediate ancestor appears to have been discovered. The greatest importance has been attached to a discovery in Java, made in 1894 by Eugene Dubois. The remains consisted of the crown of the skull, two teeth, and a femur belonging to a creature for which the name *Pithecanthropus erectus* has been invented. This pithecanthropus excited the liveliest interest as the long-sought transitional form between man and the ape. Professor Haeckel writes concerning this in his book, *The Evolution of Man*, vol. ii., p. 633: "There were very interesting scientific discussions of it at the last three International Congresses of Zoology (Leyden, 1895; Cambridge, 1898; and Berlin, 1901). I took an active part in the discussion at Cambridge, and may refer the reader to the paper I read there." (It has been translated by Dr. Gadow, under the title of *The Last Link*.) Since then we have Professor Keasbey writing in 1901 that the remains have been "pronounced genuine," and Professor Packard, in 1902, that it is now "generally recognised."

such slight service to their present possessors that we cannot suppose that they were developed under the conditions which now exist."[1] Of useless rudimentary organs, or parts of organs, there are not less than one hundred and seven in man.[2] To this category belong the coccyx—the vestige of a tail—the muscles of the ear, the vermiform appendage, etc.

"The *os coccyx* in man, though functionless as a tail, plainly represents this part in other vertebrate animals. At an early embryonic period it is free, and, as we have seen, projects beyond the lower extremities."[3] It sometimes happens that we find external relics of a tail. Professor Haeckel, in Fig. 191, vol. i., of *The Evolution of Man*, shows the tail of a six months' old boy, which Granville Harrison removed by operation. The anthropoid ape, like man, has only the rudiment of a tail.

The *ear muscles* are rudimentary in man. "It is well known how readily domestic animals—horses, cows, dogs, hares, etc.—point their ears and move them in different directions. Most of the apes do the same, and our earlier ape ancestors were also able to do it. But our later simian ancestors, which we have in common with the anthropoid apes, abandoned the use of these muscles, and they gradually became rudimentary and useless. However, we possess them still. In fact, some men can still move their ears a little backward and forward by means of the drawing and withdrawing muscles; and with practice this faculty can be much improved. But no man can now lift up his ears by the raising muscle, or change the

[1] *The Descent of Man*, vol. i., pp. 17–18.
[2] See *The Nature of Man*, p. 60.
[3] *The Descent of Man*, vol. i., p. 29.

shape of them by the small inner muscles. These muscles were very useful to our ancestors, but are of no consequence to us. This applies to most of the anthropoid apes as well."[1]

The *vermiform appendage* of the cœcum is not only practically useless, but the source of that extremely dangerous complaint, appendicitis. It is remarkable that this organ is practically identical with the vermiform appendage of anthropoid apes, yet none of the other monkeys present any such resemblance with men. Professor Haeckel, speaking of the vermiform appendage, says: "The only significance of it in man is that not infrequently a cherry-stone or some other hard and indigestible matter penetrates into its narrow cavity, and by setting up inflammation and suppuration causes the death of otherwise sound men. Teleology has great difficulty in giving a rational explanation of, and attributing to a beneficent Providence, this dreaded appendicitis. In our plant-eating ancestors this rudimentary organ was much larger, and had a useful function."[2]

"In order to understand the existence of rudimentary organs, we have only to suppose that a former progenitor possessed the parts in question in a perfect state, and that under changed habits of life they became greatly reduced, either from simple disuse or through the natural selection of those individuals which were least encumbered with a superfluous part, aided by the other means previously indicated."[3]

Whatever the precise explanation may be, can

[1] *The Evolution of Man*, vol. ii., p. 708. [2] *Ibid*, p. 774.
[3] *The Descent of Man*, vol. ii., p. 32.

we bring ourselves to suppose that God created us with a number of useless organs, or that He placed them there as a snare to entrap our judgment? Again, "rudimentary organs, for the most part, display a congenital lack of the power of resistance, and, as Darwin suggested, for this reason they are frequently the seats of disease."[1] Can anyone imagine his Maker arranging all this on purpose? I can not. We are assured by pious apologists that God has instituted pain in order to save us from injuring ourselves; how can He, then, have specially provided us with organs whose only function is to be a source of danger?

Many other examples might be given bearing on this line of argument; but enough has been said, I hope, to convince the reader that in these rudimentary organs there is overpowering evidence against separate acts of creation, and in favour of an animal origin of the human race. Besides this, we have also the evidence derived from the study of our bodily structure and embryonic development. The bearing of these three great classes of fact is, as Charles Darwin remarks, unmistakeable. "It is only our natural prejudice, and that arrogance which made our own forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods, which lead us to demur to this conclusion.[2]

§ 5. *The Overthrow of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.

No Biblical standpoint is more directly opposed to

[1] *The Nature of Man*, p. 67.
[2] *The Descent of Man*, vol i., pp. 32–33.

modern evolutionary views than the doctrine of the Fall and Atonement. We have seen, in the chapters on the Higher Criticism and on Comparative Mythology, that the Bible story of Creation is nothing but a borrowed legend; and we have now seen that it could not in any case be true. If it were, Evolution would be untrue. Now, the account of the fall of man is an exceedingly important portion of the Bible, the whole fabric of the Christian faith being constructed upon it; and there is no doubt whatever that the average Christian realises this and continues to believe in the "Fall." He may accept the doctrine of the evolution of the physical nature of man; but he flatly denies that his intellect and moral attributes were a part of the process, although such authorities as Darwin, Huxley, and Romanes clearly point out that man's intellect and moral sense have arisen from lower stages of the same faculties in his primate ancestors.

The conservative Christian believes that man was originally endowed with a lofty moral nature; that he succumbed to temptation; that he became a degraded being; that he has been working out his punishment ever since; and that his hope of escape from the curse laid upon all mankind lies in the atonement made by Jesus Christ. Even if inclined to have views less strictly in accord with the Christian teaching of the past eighteen hundred years, he still believes that all this is true in some sort of allegorical sense which cannot be exactly defined. Lastly, there is an ever-swelling host of perplexed Christians who, in their heart of hearts, feel much as Mr. Blatchford does when he says: "God is all-powerful. He could have made Adam strong enough to resist Eve. He could

have made Eve strong enough to resist the serpent. He need not have made the serpent at all. God is all-knowing. Therefore, when He made Adam and Eve and the serpent He knew that Adam and Eve *must* fall. And, if God knew they *must* fall, how could Adam help falling, and how could he justly be blamed for doing what he *must* do? God made a bridge—built it Himself, of His own materials, to His own design, and knew what the bearing strain of the bridge was. If, then, God put upon the bridge a weight equal to double the bearing strain, how could God justly blame the bridge for falling?"[1]

The average divine, whatever his denomination, is usually in no hurry to accept Evolutionist theories of the Fall, or, if he does, he keeps it to himself. Dean Wace thinks the tale of Eden and the Fall is partly historical, partly allegorical, and, in any case, true to Christian experience; and Cardinal Newman considered that the whole orthodox Christian scheme stood or fell with a belief in some great "aboriginal catastrophe." Progressive divines teach, on the contrary, that "the narrative of the Fall is not to be understood as literal history, any more than the visions of the Apocalypse are to be understood as a literal description of heaven. "For us," they say, "the underlying truth, and not the outward form in which that truth is clothed, is the essential thing." [As our first parents are represented as being in a state of guileless simplicity, and subsequently falling in with the tempting serpent, who, in obvious contrast with their untried innocence, is described as a being of special subtilty, the "underlying truth"

[1] *God and My Neighbour*, p. 184.

appears to be that, with God's cognisance, man is continually being taken advantage of by a crafty spirit of evil; or, to keep more closely to the religious evolutionist's idea, man's better nature, implanted by God, is being continually got the better of by animal instincts implanted by —?] These enlightened clerics are in a somewhat delicate position, and none probably recognise this more than they do themselves, as testified lately by the fact of over a hundred of their number distributing a manifesto to all the clergy of the Church of England, in which they express a desire to receive authoritative encouragement to face critical problems with entire candour.[1]

AN INSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

The gravity of the situation and the divergence of the new from the old teaching are summed up by the *Church Times* in the following pertinent remarks:—"It is impossible for Christians to affect nonchalance as to the result of the controversy between anthropologists like Lubbock, Lyell, Huxley, Haeckel, and Fiske, who assert the human race to have continuously (with whatever relapses) progressed out of brutish and squalid barbarism, and those who, like the late Duke of Argyll, Lang, Tylor, Hartmann,[2] Renouf, and most missionaries, maintain that savagery is a declension from higher things, and that 'man's natural state is civilisation'—not, of course, the civilisation of Paris and London, of trousers and half-

[1] The document and the hostile criticisms concerning it in religious papers are highly instructive. Except for the correspondence on the subject in the *Standard* during May last, under the title of "Faith and Religion," the general public are not likely to know of the matter.

[2] Tylor and Hartmann, however, believe in the animal descent of man.

penny papers, nor yet Rousseau's anarchic golden age, but creation in God's image after His likeness. It is said that we need believe no more about our first parents than that they were innocent—*i.e.*, had not yet made trial of good and evil; that the 'former Adam,' even after he had ceased to be a pithecoid hanging by his tail from boughs, and long after his mollusc[1] stage of existence, was still as *primus homo*, a demi-witted creature, burrowing in holes, gnawing roots, grunting, grimacing, snarling, shuddering; not even a noble savage, but bestial and grovelling. As moral consciousness slowly woke in him, he misused his powers; but such a 'fall' was really an advance. Such is the latest version of Paradise lost—of that great disinheritance, that moral and spiritual catastrophe, which, St. Paul avers, was the entrance of death into the world by one man, and which, he seems to say, dragged down the lower creation when the son of God, 'paragon of animals, noble in reason, infinite in faculty,' fell in Eden. We do not urge that the two teachings cannot be reconciled; but it is clear that the immense difficulty is not to be dismissed by saying that the Bible is a mosaic, not Mosaic, or that it does not profess to instruct us in anthropology."[2]

There is a downrightness and lucidity about this criticism of advanced theology which one cannot but admire, although one may not be able to share its optimism as to the chance of the two teachings ever becoming reconciled. How can they? Consider the

[1] Our ancestors were never "molluscs"; "worm" would be an appropriate word here.

[2] Review in the *Church Times* of May 31st, 1905, of the Dean of Westminster's book, *Some Thoughts on Inspiration*.

unsatisfactory nature of the following speculations by means of which the clerical evolutionist hopes to surmount the stumbling-block of the Fall.

THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER'S THEORY.

Dr. Gore, Bishop of Worcester, now of Birmingham, who is an adherent of Evolution, speaks mysteriously of a "fall from without."[1] As the question is of enormous importance to the truth of Christianity, I propose to examine Dr. Gore's thesis at some length. He grants that the idea of special creation is inconceivable, and that our race has an animal ancestry, and then gives us the following description of primeval man, which (shades of our forefathers!) he assures us is according to the Bible and the enlightened ideas of early Christianity: "Man began at the bottom, immature, in the fullest sense of immaturity, totally undeveloped, but with a capacity for development." A correspondent of Dr. Gore's, anxious possibly to be let down gently in the matter of his ancestor, suggested "immature, but not deformed." This Dr. Gore accepted as a good phrase. Most of us would think that, when our ancestor was at the stage, say, of the ape-like man, he would be deformed according to existing notions of the human form divine, while, if only at the protoplasm stage, the question of form would hardly matter.

It has been explained to me by a clerical biologist that the Bishop meant that the Fall was not a fall from a completely developed form to one less

[1] This and the following quotations are from "Advent Lectures on Sin," delivered by Dr. Gore, then Bishop of Worcester, in St. Philip's Church, Birmingham. They were reported in the *Church Times* of December 4th, 11th, and 18th, 1903.

developed, but that there was perversion of the development, so that a rudimentary life which might have been developed one way has developed along a less favourable path—a common occurrence in ontogeny. However that may be, and whatever the physical or mental state of this creature at the time he "fell," was his previous state one of beautiful innocence and purity? What about those inherited animal instincts? Dr. Gore goes on to say that "humanity might have, with infinitely more rapidity, developed upward; it has been delayed, retarded by sin." Granted; but at what stage of development did this poor wretch ever get a proper chance? The Christian faith inculcates that there is no chance for him without belief. What belief did this immature man have to guide him?

However, let us see what more Dr. Gore may have to tell us on the Fall and Atonement. The words already quoted are from his second lecture to the Birmingham working men. In his third and last lecture he says: "He (God) appointed that man alone of creatures should have a twofold nature—that he should have fellowship with physical nature, but also that he should have fellowship with God. He (man) fell through a suggestion from without, and preferred wilfulness to obedience; he thus fell into sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Note that, if sin is said to have caused death, Christ is said to have abolished death. 'He that believeth on Me shall never die.' It is death as men have known it, the end of their hopes, that sin introduced and Christ abolished."

Here, then, is the Bishop's answer regarding the "Fall" question. There has been a "fall from *without*," whatever that may happen to mean. I should

have thought that, if there was a fall at all, it was from *within*, much as Canon Wilson puts it.[1] Bishop Gore, however, probably feels that it has to be from *without* to agree with the Bible story of the temptation. We are told nothing further about this mysterious "without," and I ask: "Could anything be more vague and unsatisfactory than this explanation of the Fall?"

Assuming that determinists are wrong and that the Creator is not responsible for the shortcomings of His creatures, the only fault for which primeval man could possibly be held to be answerable is that of not controlling his animal instincts so soon as he commenced to be conscious and could no longer claim the excuse of innocence. Probably he did his best, and began to improve himself ever so little. In that case, as the *Church Times* sapiently remarks, there was no Fall, but an advance. If he did not strive as much as he might have done, there was, at all events, no sudden leap over a precipice; for the gift of increased consciousness, such as the human being now possesses, must have evolved very gradually. However, the creation of the world and all that therein is was also exceedingly gradual, and yet the pious find themselves able to consider the Bible account to be an accurate though allegorical representation of the process; so there is really nothing to prevent them from considering the account of a remarkable incident in a certain garden during a hot summer's day, shortly after man put in his appearance on this globe, to be a true representation of the perverse conduct of their ancestors through countless ages.

[1] See p. 284–5.

For this so-called "Fall" we are to be visited with a death which will be the end of our hopes if we do not believe in Christ. The new threat held over the unbeliever is that he will forfeit his right to immortality. As this is in place of the old-fashioned consignment to hell, we may hope, for the sake of the human race as a whole, past and present, that the new Christian dogma is nearer the truth than the old. Most of us, however, will, I think, come to the conclusion that there has never been a "Fall" at all in any sense. Dr. Gore in one breath asks us to think man is so much above the ape that his spiritual powers cannot have been evolved; yet, when science points out that they were evolved—that man *rose* so much above his relations—he still speaks of a *fall!* It is an outrage to our common sense. And, if there were a Fall, may we not say with the Persian poet?—

> Oh Thou who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
> Beset the Path I was to travel in,
> Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
> Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin.

THE ARCHDEACON OF MANCHESTER'S THEORY.

Archdeacon, now Canon, J. M. Wilson tells us[1] that "We are taking our part in the long struggle of good against evil. This has been often pictured to us as the struggle of God against some Personal Power of Evil which we call Satan, the fact of struggle suggesting two rival powers. But the evolutionary way of regarding it presents the struggle as one of the divine element in man struggling to overcome the

[1] In an address to the Students' Christian Union of Owens College, Manchester, on January 8th, 1904.

purely animal inheritance of lust and passion inherited from a far by-gone stage." Canon Wilson, therefore, believes, as every thorough evolutionist must believe, that we have to look to an animal and not a human ancestor for the ultimate origin of what we call sin. But we want to know where the "Fall" comes in, and this he has explained elsewhere,[1] in what seems to me to be the only possible way open to an evolutionist. He says: "Man fell, according to science, when he first became conscious of the conflict of freedom and conscience; and each individual man falls as his ancestor fell." Dr. Wilson does not attempt to make out that there was any particular "fall" at any particular period in man's history, such as Dr. Gore apparently still clings to; but he plainly tells us: "I do not mean to say that there is a particular moment at which men fell: *it is not so.* It is a continuous struggle of good and evil." He continues: "I see in this nothing to conflict with a legitimate interpretation of the story of the Fall in the third chapter of Genesis. Such a narrative is not an illusion, still less a mere fiction; it is, as all teaching of spiritual truth must be, a temporary and figurative mode of expression." In other words, Dr. Wilson considers these early chapters of Genesis, and probably a great deal more of the Old Testament and some of the New, to be only an allegory. With regard to the Atonement difficulty, Canon Wilson's argument is simply that "We need only to look at the world as it is to see the struggle of the two-fold nature in man; to see that it has need of a Redemption, of a Saviour." Few, I fear, will accept this latest explanation by a

[1] In his interesting book, *Problems of Religion and Science*, p. 70.

learned and earnest believer. Theologians, in Canon Wilson's opinion, have made a grievous mistake when they say: "If the story of the Fall is not literally true, then it is literally false, and with it goes the need of a Redemption, of a Saviour." Yet most people—and these will include the whole body both of the old-fashioned orthodox and of the unbelievers—will certainly side with those "grievously mistaken" theologians.

THE RATIONALIST'S THEORY.

To many of us there seems no need whatever to have recourse to the supernatural in order to account for the origin of sin. It is not one of the mysteries of life. When we know who our ancestors were, and hence why we possess certain instincts, it is quite unnecessary to predicate a "Fall." Details of the Rationalist's view of sin (and of the reasons for morality) will be found in the last chapter of this book.

CONCLUSIONS.

These, then, are the difficulties created by the doctrine of Evolution. They are difficulties which appear completely to impugn the very nature of God, the veracity of the Bible, and the dogmas of sin and its atonement. We have already seen, by our study of Bible criticism and comparative mythology, how grave are the grounds for distrusting the Faith, and Evolution seems to be just the finishing stroke that was required for confirming our suspicions. Our next task is to see whether there are any other arguments for belief of sufficient weight to warrant us in overstepping the boundaries of reason by an act of faith.

THEISM

Chapter VI.

THE FAILURE OF THEISTIC ARGUMENTS

§ 1. *Preliminary Remarks.*

Our next task is to study the arguments for theism. Under these may be ranged — the cosmological argument, which concludes that there must be one eternal, unconditioned, self-existent cause; the teleological[1] argument, which concludes that nature's first cause must be an intelligence; and the ethical argument—the proof from the moral order and conscience—which concludes that the supreme intelligence must be a moral, a beneficent being. To these may be added the argument from religious experience.

THEISM, AND WHO ARE THEISTS.

First a word about theism. Theism is belief in the existence of a God as the creator and ruler of the universe. It assumes a living relation of God to his creatures, but does not define it. Although θεός and Deus are equivalent, theism has come to be distinguished from deism. The latter, according to some theologians, while equally opposed to atheism, denies or ignores the personality of God, and therefore

[1] Teleology is the name given to the doctrine of final causes; the theory of tendency to an end, or the arrangement of things as they are for a purpose.

denies Christianity.[1] Theism, on the contrary, underlies Christianity. Accordingly, in considering the truth or untruth of Christianity, we are only concerned with theism. However, it should be borne in mind that, although a man cannot be a Christian without being a theist, he may be, and very often is in these days, a theist without being a Christian. Personally I could not be a theist without being a Christian. Having once been a Christian, all the more is it impossible for me to remain a theist. For, if Christianity be untrue, then, so it seems to me, theism must be untrue also. How can we worship a God who has never definitely revealed Himself—a God who could allow us to cajole ourselves into thinking that He had revealed Himself? Without a definite revelation, what do we know? The so-called theistic proofs are, as we shall see, worthless. If there be a first cause, if there be an intelligence, if there be a personality at all, there is as much proof of its being a Devil as a God. Are we, then, to worship the unknown? Can we worship an eternal energy? In spite of these grave difficulties, there are a very large number of non-Christian theists dispersed all over Christendom and heathendom. Of the cultured men who think they can still lay claim to the name of Christian, the bulk are, in point of fact, non-Christian

[1] "God," says Canon Liddon, "is banished from the world by deism, which puts nature in His place" (*Some Elements of Religion*, pp. 56–7). The seventeenth and eighteenth-century deists, however, did not deny the personality of God, but the fact of revelation. "In recent theology deism has generally come to be regarded as, in common with theism, holding in opposition to atheism that there is a God, and in opposition to pantheism that God is distinct from the world, but as differing from theism in maintaining that God is separate from the world, having endowed it with self-sustaining and self-acting powers, and then abandoned it to itself" (*Enc. Brit.*, art. "Theism").

theists. Some of these quiet their conscience by the thought that they are still preserving a "reverent agnosticism" with regard to Christian dogmas; while certain anti-Haeckelites of the type of Professor E. Armitage (who urges scientific men to "remember that we only know appearances, and that whenever we affirm anything about what lies behind appearances we are making hazardous inferences"[1]) do not seem to be aware that they are adherents of one of the fundamental principles of agnosticism, and, therefore, *ipso facto*, are not theists.

Theism in its modern Unitarian form is the creed of many of the most cultured and most religious minds of our time, alike in Europe and America; and it has also signally shown its power in contemporary India. Only a few days before I left the latter country two years ago, I had an interesting discussion with one of the leading spirits of the Brahmo Samaj movement, and, in answer to my queries, he replied that it was with the Unitarians that he and his fellow thinkers were most in sympathy, and that they were never likely to turn Christians. This Unitarian theism, it may be remarked, is often seen to approximate to, or become absorbed into, pantheism or agnosticism. But it is not of Unitarians that I would speak so much as of the man who calls and often thinks himself a Christian proper, notwithstanding the admission that the Christian dogmas may be partially or wholly false. This misconception of "What it is to be a Christian"[2]

[1] *Contemporary Review* for May, art. "The Scientists and Common Sense."

[2] Under this title there is a pamphlet (Charles H. Kelly, Paternoster Row) by the Ven. J. M. Wilson, Archdeacon of Manchester, in which it is averred that "We dare not deny the name of Christian to such as live in Christ's spirit and do His will, though they know not for

is one of the many that tend to confuse and delay a straight reply to the question, "Is Christianity true?" Having digested these prefatory remarks, let us now proceed to consider the Theistic arguments.

§ 2. *The Existence of a First Cause—An Uncaused Cause.*[1]

The hypothesis of modern science is that everything as it now exists in the universe is the result of an infinite series of causes and effects; everything that happens is the result of something else that happened previously, and so on backwards to all eternity. The Agnostic scientist says that we know nothing about this Infinite Cause, and that the idea of a First Cause is absurd. The Theist affirms that there is an Eternal Infinite Being who is the First Cause. He also affirms that he has science on his side. Thus, in the Baird Lectures of 1876, Dr. Flint stated that "the progress of science has not more convincingly and completely dispersed the once

certain how God manifested himself in Christ, and will not profess a certainty they do not feel." And, again, it is maintained that "we rest on the broad ground of the vast experience of the world, and the testimony of our own conscience, that Christ has lifted mankind up, and shown man what is good; and this we may describe as bringing man to God, and revealing God to man. This redemption, salvation, we acknowledge as a fact. He who has this faith in Christ, and lets it work its natural result in making him more like Christ, deserves to be called a Christian." This does indeed give plenty of latitude, far more in fact than the Church as a body seems likely to give for many a long day to come. It will certainly enable many who are now non-Christian theists to call themselves Christians. Bishop Eden told Canon Wilson, at the Wakefield Diocesan Conference (October 17th, 1905), that he was in advance of his age. The Canon had suggested, among other things, the surrender by the Church of "all land ecclesiastically held where these rights conflicted with the public interest"! He is similarly in advance of his age in some aspects of the religious question. Unfortunately, reformers always are liable to be "in advance of their age."

[1] Flint's *Theism*, pp. 133–4.

prevalent notion that the universe was created about 6,000 years ago than it has convincingly and completely established that everything of which our senses inform us has had a commencement in time."[1] This opinion is still proclaimed by the Church to be the opinion of science. But modern science does not point to a beginning of the scheme of things. The consensus of opinion is entirely the other way. So far as we know, the ultimate cause recedes for ever and ever beyond the time when there was no distinction of earth and sea and atmosphere, all being mingled together in nebulous matter. Where would the Theist fix the "commencement"? The gaps on which theology at one time relied are rapidly disappearing. The apparent chasm between the organic and inorganic, between the lifeless and that which lives, according to the latest conceptions of science, no longer exists. Man may even succeed in manufacturing life, so that yet another teleological argument may collapse.

§ 3. *The First Cause an Intelligence.*

DESIGN AND DIRECTIVITY.

The argument from design is one which appeals perhaps more than any other to the average man. As he looks around and reflects, he feels that there must be design, and, therefore, a Designer. He feels also that God must be constantly present directing the carrying out of His design. He is in accord with the Theist who maintains that purpose and plan are manifest throughout the cosmos, and that, although it might be conceded that every step of the process

[1] *Theism* (p. 102). This book is a standard apologetic work on Theism. Dr. Flint is also the writer of the article on "Theism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

has been achieved by the forces of Evolution, it is impossible to exclude the *presiding activity* of a mind which has planned the whole and predetermined the movements of every portion. We are to believe, then, that the Designer Himself put the forces in motion for the first time, that He knew exactly what would be the product of those forces down to the minutest detail and for all time, and yet, in face of the undeviating law-regulated cosmos which He has created, He in some way continues to guide these forces. From the very first step, the making of the electron and thence the atom, to the last, the making of man's brain, the Theist sees the finger of God. The mystery of life is thus taken to be explained or diminished by asserting that it is produced and controlled by some other mystery. The only alternative to this belief, so he maintains, is a universe of random chance and capricious disorder. But "Haeckel and his colleagues hold that the direction which the evolutionary agencies take is not 'fortuitous'; that they never could take but the one direction which they have actually taken."[1] While "the Theist says the ultimate object must have been foreseen and the forces must have been guided, or they would never have worked steadily in this definite direction, the

[1] See p. 73 of *Haeckel's Critics Answered*, by Joseph McCabe (Watts & Co.). In the chapter on "God" there is a striking exposition of the very latest arguments for and against Theism. The opinions of Messrs. Ward, Newman, Smythe, Le Conte, Fiske, W. N. Clarke, Croll, Aubrey Moore, Iverach, Dallinger, Ballard, Rhondda Williams, Profeit, Kennedy, W. James, and Royce are all considered. Many pious Christians may have read the apologists' criticisms of Haeckel's well-known work, *The Riddle of the Universe*, but few will have studied the work itself, and still fewer these clear and convincing replies to the criticisms. It cannot be on account of the cost, as a copy of the cheap edition of either of these works can be obtained for 4½d.

Monist says that these forces no more needed guiding than does a tramcar; there was only one direction possible for them."[1] To refute this the apologist gravely replies that, "if you cast to the ground an infinite (or a finite) number of letters, they might after infinite gyrations make a word here and there; but we should think the man an enthusiast who expected even a short sentence, and a fool if he ever expected them to make a poem." We are expected, it seems, to regard it as a miracle that natural forces should not lose their uniform character, and act miraculously! Evidently, either the question is begged or the analogy is absurd. An argument of this kind is worse than useless, for it only serves to demonstrate the hopelessness of the teleologist's position. Spinoza's position is more reasonable; for he conceives that all is the outcome of inexorable necessity—that neither chance nor purpose governs the eternal and the infinite.

DIRECTIVITY.

Directivity has hitherto been insisted upon by Theists. It would not conform with our ideas of God that He should remain a passive observer so soon as He had invented a machine that would never stop and had started it going. Yet interference with the machinery is inconceivable, the universe being ruled by eternal, immutable, and irrefragable laws. "The only possible conception of telic [purposeful] action on a cosmic scale is that, from the start, the matter-force reality was of such a nature that it would infallibly evolve into the cosmos we form part of to-day. Any other

[1] *Haeckel's Critics Answered*, p. 73.

conception of 'guidance' and 'control' is totally unthinkable. And, as a fact, Theists are settling down to formulate their position in that way. The interference, as Ward says, took place *before* the process began."[1] A Law Maker can be postulated, but there is not a particle of evidence that He is also a Law Breaker.

Attempts are still made, however, by clerical scientists to prove that there is directivity. The Rev. Professor George Henslow, in his book, *Present-Day Rationalism Critically Examined*, argues that the tendency which living organisms show to develop in one direction rather than another, and their capacity to respond to environment, betoken a directing Mind. Granting, for the moment, that the doctrine of Natural Selection is false or inadequate, it seems to me that the acknowledged facts of the "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" sufficiently dispose of this new apology. Organisms do *not* all adapt themselves to environment, and their fate, in consequence, is first one of increasing misery, and finally of extinction. Only those that do adapt themselves survive. It appears that a scientist when he turns apologist is conveniently able to forget all but the more fortunate organisms.

DESIGN.

If the evidence for a *directing* Mind has to be given up, the difficulties of a Theist are certainly increased. There would be difficulties, for instance, regarding the utility of prayer. Still, he could think with Father Waggett, that "the interaction of forces *inherent* in the whole produces the infinite variety of living beauty

[1] *Haeckel's Critics Answered*, p. 74.

which we see."[1] And he can still join with Dr. Flint in exclaiming: "Every atom, every molecule, must, even in what is ultimate in it, bear the impress of a Supernatural Power and Wisdom; must reflect the glory of God, and proclaim its dependence upon Him."[2] To remain a Theist, however, one must have not only evidence of design, but of the benevolent intention of the Designer. Before considering the latter question, I venture to offer a few further remarks about the former. Is there consistent evidence of design?

Beauty.—As a proof of design we are asked by the Theist to contemplate the beauty and sublimity which the universe exhibits. Let us contemplate, then, the beauty of the Bay of Naples. Is it not purely accidental, purely the outcome of natural agencies, of effects produced by position, distance, etc.? Again, "the beauty of the diatoms that are brought from the lowest depths of the ocean, the beauty of the radiolaria that swarm about the coast, and the beauty of a thousand minute animal structures, are obviously not designed and purposed beauties. They were unknown until the microscope was invented; the polariscope reveals yet further beauties; the telescope yet more. The idea of these being designed for our, or for God's, entertainment belongs, as Mr. Mallock says, 'to a pre-scientific

[1] *Religion and Science*, pp. 89–90.

[2] *Theism*, Lecture IV. Side by side with this work should be read Professor Romanes' *Candid Examination of Theism*, under the pseudonym of "Physicus." Father Waggett says of it, in his contribution to the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1896: "It is a vigorous, earnest work.....The argument finds its strength in the destruction of teleology by the doctrine of Natural Selection; not Evolution simply, but Natural Selection as providing a mechanical substitute for intelligent design."

age.'"[1] It is sometimes urged that the tendency of evolution is towards greater beauty. Is it? That all depends upon what your idea of beauty may be—whether you will consider the structure best suited to its environment beautiful or otherwise. We are told that there are signs that the human race will one day be toothless. At present we admire pretty teeth; perhaps our descendants will go into raptures over a toothless gum. That their sense of beauty may not be outraged, let us hope it may be so. The hideous pigmies of Central Africa probably think themselves beautiful, and in the distant future, when the conditions of existence on this globe have radically changed, and when its inhabitants have adapted themselves to those conditions, the new "beauties" may possibly be quite as ugly as "missing links." After all, beauty is a matter of taste. The sufficient objection to the "beauty" argument is, to my mind, contained in a very few words: "Look at the ugliness! Who designed that?"

Harmony.—But, it will be urged, if beauty is a poor argument, at least you must grant that the general harmony in Nature still remains to be accounted for. Beauty is only one of its countless harmonies. The objection to this argument is a very simple one. Nature is full of discords. Ugliness is by no means the only discord. It is because this is so little realised that M. Elie Metchnikoff has devoted nearly the whole of his book, *The Nature of Man*, to the discussion of the disharmonies in man's nature alone. There are disharmonies in the organisation of the digestive system, in the organisation and activities

[1] See p. 76 of *Haeckel's Critics Answered.*

of the reproductive apparatus, in the family and social instincts, and in the instinct of self-preservation, etc. For instance, in the human body there are disharmonies of the wisdom teeth, the *bête-noire* of dentistry; of the useless vermiform appendage, the seat of the disease appendicitis; of the large intestine, which could very well be dispensed with, and is the seat of many grave diseases, such as dysentery, and so on. The perversions of instinct among human beings (another disharmony) are likely to be attributed by the conservative Theist to the Devil, and by the liberal to Dr. Gore's "Fall from Without," so it will be better to take an example from the animal world. Darwin informs us that the "female of one of the emus (*Dromæus irroratus*), as soon as she catches sight of her progeny, becomes violently agitated, and, notwithstanding the resistance of the father, appears to use her utmost endeavours to destroy them" (*Descent of Man*, vol. ii., chap. xvi., pp. 204–205). To those who still hold by this argument, I can only recommend a perusal of Professor Metchnikoff's book of disharmonies, and would beg them to remember that it has been written by a man whose profession and attainments entitle his opinions on such a subject to the highest consideration. The cruelty attending the process by which harmony is attained has already been commented upon by me in § 2 of the previous chapter.

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AMONG THEISTIC APOLOGISTS.

I have finally to call attention to the fact that even among the apologists themselves there is considerable difference of opinion as to the value of

these arguments for Theism. Dr. Flint exclaims: "Strange as it may seem, there are many *Theists* at the present day who represent it—revelation of God in the whole of nature external to us—as insufficient, or even worthless, and who join the Atheists in denying that God's existence can be proved, and in affirming that all the arguments for His existence are inconclusive and sophistical. Such Theists seem to me not only the best allies of Atheists, but even more effective labourers in the cause of unbelief than Atheists themselves."[1] Since Dr. Flint wrote these words the number of such Theists has vastly increased. It is owned on all sides by the advanced school of apologists that God's existence cannot be proved by an appeal to the reasoning faculties; and, among other arguments, that from design is gradually being discarded.

Father Waggett offers us interesting information regarding this argument in his little book, *Religion and Science*.[2] He considers that Paley and others of the old teleologists were wrong in leaning upon a narrow argument from design. "It need not here be repeated," he says, "that the evidence of such workmanship cannot prove God in the true sense of an *infinite* and *all*-wise Cause; but only a cause possessed of immense wisdom and immense though limited power, a Demiurgus of the greatest force and the most minute care, but not a Creator in the sense of theology."[3] Father Waggett, who is a biologist, and, therefore, necessarily an Evolutionist, would not be disconcerted if living things were manufactured

[1] *Theism*, p. 79.
[2] Chapter on "Theism and Natural Selection."
[3] *Religion and Science*, p. 83.

in the laboratory to-morrow. In his opinion, "If anywhere we catch nature in the making, if we surprise the sequence by which even man himself gained his difference from other things, we shall not by this find reverence lowered.....It is a *theological* readjustment which is required, and not one in 'natural science.'"[1] The position here taken up is wise, and one that all who remain Theists will eventually have to adopt. But for most of us these theological readjustments are no easy matter. We reason that Paley's *Evidences* have in their time assisted men to be Theists, and now his arguments are condemned by the better informed. How do we know that the same fate may not await the new arguments of the Christian evolutionist? How is it that God allowed earnest and learned divines to commit themselves to arguments in proof of His existence, the subsequent overthrow of which has been a potent cause for unbelief?

§ 4. *The First Cause a Beneficent Intelligence.*

A PERSONAL GOD.

As ages roll on, God's attributes—or rather, we should say, the attributes given Him by man—are continually altering. All that the early gods demanded was fear and worship. Even the Jehovah of the Jews asked at first little else than this. Anthropomorphic conceptions of God are now admitted by the cultured to be a thing of the past. Do they not, however, still survive when human emotions, such as love and anger, happiness and sorrow, are attributed to the Deity? We acknowledge God to be Infinite, and, consequently, incomprehensible by finite minds; yet

[1] *Religion and Science*, pp. 89, 90.

we imagine and attempt to argue that He possesses the same qualities—those we most admire—as ourselves! "How can we believe in a *personal* God?" asks the Rationalist. "A person must have limitations, or he ceases to be a person." However, we must not forget that in philosophy and theology the word "person" simply implies "a nature endowed with consciousness," and does not involve limits. Demurring to this definition, there still remains another difficulty. In all our experience and knowledge, emotions and intelligence are connected with nerve structures; how, then, can we attribute these qualities to a Being who is described to us as devoid of any nerve structure? I know of no answer that could be called satisfactory from a Theistic standpoint.

In the previous section we considered the doctrine of final causes. This doctrine, as Spinoza points out,[1] "does away with the perfection of God; for, if God acts for an object, he necessarily desires something which he lacks." The Theist goes a step further than the mere teleologist, and insists on a *benevolent* purpose throughout nature. Is he, then, oblivious to Spinoza's objection? No, he is not; and therefore it is that he struggles to save his personal God by an infinite extension of the limits of His personality. In fine, Theism, in the hands of its modern advocates, and in spite of the seeming orthodoxy of the phrase, "Divine Immanence," is often nothing less than another form of Pantheism.

DIVINE IMMANENCE IN NATURE.

The Church's great philosopher to-day, the Rev.

[1] In *The Ethics*, Part i., appendix.

J. R. Illingworth, D.D., argues[1] that "Divine Immanence in Nature" excludes Pantheism—the belief that God is *merely* immanent in nature—as well as Deism and Monism, while it harmonises with Trinitarianism. We are to "conceive of God as at once transcending *and* immanent in nature."[2] He admits that "this relationship may be incomprehensible,"[3] but states that "we know it in our own case to be a fact."[4] Afterwards he puts the question, "Is the universe His body or His work?"[5] and proceeds to explain that the Trinitarian conception of God furnishes, or helps to furnish, an answer to this question. "It is," he maintains, "intellectually the most satisfactory."[6] It apparently is so to certain subtle and biassed intellects; but the question is, Is it so, will it ever be so, to the average mortal?

A FACT IN HISTORY.

In another place,[7] when speaking again of the doctrine of the Trinity, he says: "Men forget that it supports and is supported by the whole weight of a fact in history, with which nothing else in the wide world can even for a moment be compared. That fact is the age-long empire of Jesus Christ over the hearts of men." This, then, is the final argument in support of the Christian dogmas, including this the most incomprehensible of them all. Why should not the Buddhist claim the same authority for the dogmas of his faith? The evidential value is precisely the same. Turn to any well-known work bearing on this phase of the question. Read, we will say, Edwin

[1] In his work, *Divine Immanence*.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 71–2. [3] *Ibid*, pp. 71–2. [4] *Ibid*, pp. 71–2.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 71–2. [6] *Ibid*, p. 73. [7] *Ibid*, p. 161.

Arnold's poem, *The Light of Asia;* or, better still, read Mr. H. Fielding's books, *The Soul of a People* and *The Hearts of Men*, and hear the words of one who has lived for years among Buddhists and studied their hearts.

That an ideal should reign over the hearts of men is no new thing; much less is this a cause for marvel when "One has come, claiming to be God made manifest—manifest in order to attract our love."[1] Christian apologists urge that He has not only attracted the hearts of men in the past, but still retains His hold upon their affections, and that therein lies an essential difference between Christianity and all other religions. Christianity, say they, in this respect at least, stands pre-eminently alone. Is not Buddhism, then, one of the great living religions of the present day? Has it not existed during twenty-four centuries? Does it not at the present time surpass, in the number of its followers and the area of its prevalence, any other form of creed? Is not Gautama Buddha worthy of men's love, if we are to credit the best authenticated records of his life? "Discordant in frequent particulars," writes[2] Sir Edwin Arnold, "and sorely overlaid by corruptions, inventions, and misconceptions, the Buddhistical books yet agree in the one point of recording nothing —no single act or word—which mars the perfect purity and tenderness of this Indian teacher, who united the truest princely qualities with the intellect of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr." Loving disciples, living in an age of ignorance and

[1] *Divine Immanence*, p. 161.
[2] In the preface to his poem.

superstition, piously ascribed to him divine powers, and, disobeying his mandate, gave him fervent worship. That worship, that adoration, still persists. So likewise the adoration of Jesus Christ still persists. This is certainly a fact in history; but can we safely build upon it the metaphysical theories of the Christian Faith?

THE PAST AND PRESENT POSITION OF THE ETHICAL ARGUMENT.

In my comments upon Dr. Illingworth's views regarding "Divine Immanence," I fear I have digressed somewhat from the subject at present under consideration—the Theistic argument from a Beneficent Intelligence. "The ethical argument held a very subordinate place in the estimation of writers on natural theology until Kant rested on it almost the whole weight of Theism. It has ever since been prominent, and has been the argument most relied upon to produce practical conviction."[1] What was once the weakest argument has now become the strongest. Why? Not, I take it, because anything has occurred to make the weaker any stronger, but because what was thought to be the strongest is now found to be weaker than the weakest! How can the ethical argument be maintained in face of objections which continue to become ever graver as our knowledge increases?

EVIL FOR WHICH MAN IS *NOT* HELD RESPONSIBLE.

The problem of pain, and of evil generally, has been studied elsewhere.[2] The importance of this problem

[1] Art. "Theism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
[2] More particularly in the chapter on Evolution.

is very great, for, by the universal consent of Christendom (*not* of mankind, as we shall see later on), the very name of God carries with it the sense of goodness, the highest and best that we know of or can imagine. For this reason it is customary for the pious to regard every calamity reverently as a punishment from God, or as serving some good purpose. Can this theory hold good when tornadoes and earthquakes destroy God's own places of worship? Only lately the German Emperor, imbued from childhood with this pious theory, warned his people that the Japanese had been sent as a scourge from God.

I remember, at the time of the terrible catastrophe in Martinique, due to the eruption of Mont Pelée, asking a lady: "Do you think this wholesale slaughter and awful suffering has any connection with the wickedness of the afflicted people?" "Certainly," she replied, "they must have been very wicked people." It just so happened that the only man who escaped scatheless was a murderer who had been imprisoned in a cell below ground. So the theory she and I had been brought up to believe in would not work, which ever way you looked at it. The apologist has usually a number of strings to his bow; and, as the Old Testament teaching concerning bad men descending "quick into the pit" would not suit, he might argue that the criminal was given an opportunity for repentance. In that case, we must suppose that all the others who perished had no need of repentance. Again, with regard to the terrible tortures that many endured, it could be argued that those "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth"; but what possible object could there be in this chastening during the last moments of their life upon earth? The agony

of the death-struggle, suffered by the good and the bad alike, has yet to be shown to be in accord with the theory of a benevolent Deity.

These old-fashioned views of evil are gradually being modified even by theologians.[1] Dr. Flint says distinctly: "I cannot agree with those who think there is no mystery in mere pain—that it is sufficiently accounted for by moral evil."[2] It seems a pity that his advocacy for benevolence in the Deity should lead him afterwards to qualify this sensible statement by an amazing assertion which begs the whole question. "*The character of pain itself*," he says, "*is such as to indicate that its author must be a benevolent being*—one who does not afflict for his own pleasure, but for his creatures' profit."[3] Where does

[1] With the opinion of the scientist we are, or ought to be by now, familiar. "The fundamental axiom of scientific thought is that there is not, never has been, and never will be, any disorder in Nature. The admission of the occurrence of any event which was not the logical consequence of the immediately antecedent events, according to those definite, ascertained, or unascertained rules which we call the 'laws of Nature,' would be an act of self-destruction on the part of science" (Huxley on Catastrophes, p. 247 of his *Essays on Controverted Questions*).

[2] *Theism*, p. 245.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 246. Since I penned these words an assertion, seemingly even yet more amazing, has been propounded by one of our greatest living surgeons. In an address at the inaugural meeting of the session of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, held on October 31st, 1905, Sir Frederick Treves contended that the phenomena or symptoms of disease were marked by purpose, and that that purpose was beneficent. The processes of disease aimed, he held, not at the destruction of life, but at the saving of it. Disease was not one of the ills that flesh was heir to, but one of the good gifts, for its origin was benevolent and protective. Here, indeed, is new grist for the mill of Theistic apologists. I am dumbfounded, and can only say, as Lord Rosebery is reported to have said after hearing the address, "I hope we shall all be able to train ourselves to that moral altitude, that we shall be able to discern philosophically that the symptoms which afflict us are the remedy, and not the cause, of our discomforts." When we have soared to these heights, we shall have arrived at just the correct frame of mind for enlisting ourselves as ardent disciples of Mrs. Eddy.

the profit come in? Does anyone, I wonder, console himself with Dr. Flint's views as he sits in the dentist's chair? The purpose *may* be benevolent, but there is nothing in the *character* of pain to show this. The benevolence of the purpose is only a pious surmise.

EVIL FOR WHICH MAN *IS* HELD RESPONSIBLE.

The very existence of the God of our hearts depends upon the proof of His morality. *The argument from the moral order* seems at first sight a strong one. Morality, even adopting the naturalist's explanation that it is only a social instinct, can be regarded as the result of a divine spark. Its beneficial influence on the happiness of the individual and the well-being of the race cannot be too strongly insisted upon as a well-ascertained fact. "Virtue is self-rewarding, and vice is self-punishing."[1] But the Rationalist asks: "Why design man's nature so that he is more likely to go wrong, when he gets the chance, than to go right; and this in despite of the moral or social instinct?" The usual answer of the religionist is that, if we were made good, we should be mere machines. He forgets that God is, according to his own showing, just such a machine—one that cannot go wrong. Does he not himself prefer the fellowship of the more perfect machines—of the good-*natured?* Yet these, according to his argument, are mere machines compared with those who have inherited vicious or disagreeable characteristics, and do their best to fight against them. He is quite right. The former do partake of the character of a more perfect machine,

[1] *Theism*, p. 228.

and the latter deserve all the sympathy we can give them for being less perfect; but the fact remains that the less fortunately endowed are seldom able to raise themselves up to the level of the more fortunately endowed, and there is no doubt whose society we prefer. Surely there is something wrong in an argument that furnishes such inadequate excuses in order to explain why the Designer gave us natures infinitely inferior to His own.

> Oh, Thou who man from basest clay didst make,
> And e'en for Paradise devised the snake,
> For all the sin wherewith the face of man
> Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and *take!*

Some of Nature's plans would appear to be specially designed to bring out the worst side of the diverse nature implanted in man. The plan of the struggle for existence is a palpable instance. Take another—take the plan for the reproduction of life. Could any *Omnipotent* Being be proud of it? Let alone the unfair division of pain, which the discredited Eden story can now no longer account for, is it helpful to man in his struggle to improve his nature? Again, "a very little disorder in the organisation of the brain suffices to cause hallucinations of the senses, to shake the intellect from its throne, to paralyse the will, and to *corrupt the sentiments and affections.*"[1] "How precise and skilful," remarks Dr. Flint, lost in admiration of the Designer, "must be the adjustment between the sound brain and the sane mind!" "How fiend-like," says the horrified Rationalist, "would be the Intellect which could have exercised its ingenuity to devise a mechanism inherently liable to get out of order, and

[1] *Theism*, "The Argument from Order."

thereby to transform its unhappy possessor into a fool or villain." In the event of the latter result, moreover, man, according to Christ's teaching (if honestly interpreted), is to suffer eternal torment!

CONSCIENCE.

Regarding theories of the origin of conscience such as those of J. S. Mill, Bain, Darwin, and Spencer, Dr. Flint remarks: "It does not matter whether conscience be primary or derivative; it exists."[1] That it does matter is shown by the fact that the bulk of the apologists still stoutly maintain that conscience is a special attribute of man—a divine instinct—and is not derived from the lower animals. We have, I think, gone into this sufficiently in the previous chapter, and I shall confine my remarks to another aspect of the question—the fallibility of the moral consciousness.

The liability of conscience to err is, or should be, a platitude. Its two components—the reason and the emotions—both being fallible, it necessarily follows that conscience must have the same quality. We have only to think for a moment to discover innumerable examples in proof of this. An illustration which occurs to me, and which will hurt no one's susceptibilities, is that of the Wa Daruma. This is an East African tribe practising a strict morality which is all the more remarkable on account of the gross immorality of the neighbouring tribes. Nevertheless, the *conscience* of the Wa Daruma bids them kill their twin offspring. If conscience, then, be fallible, how is it a Theistic proof? Because, though it may make a mistake

[1] *Theism*, p. 226.

through an untutored reason, or through a reason clouded by deceptive emotions, the consciousness that there is a right or wrong at all is sufficient proof of a moral intelligence? So be it; but it is passing strange that God should allow conscience to deceive us. John Locke well said, many years ago: "Children are travellers newly arrived in a strange country: we should therefore *make conscience not to deceive them.*" Are we not children of God in a strange country? *We* would not deceive our children. The acquittal of conscience gives pleasure, as the condemnation gives pain—remorse—and every man must obey his conscience if he would be happy. What a thousand pities it seems that it should ever lead him into error! Should it not be a divine intuition of the right both in conduct and belief?

It *is* an intuition of the right, the believer will say, when it tells you to believe in Christ and God. I would gladly think so; but every believer of every creed on the face of the earth says the same about his belief, and hence the amazing persistence of erroneous beliefs. When the voice of conscience is composed of a blind reliance on intuition (*i.e.*, on the emotions) and a distrust of reason, how can the result be otherwise?[1] I will give an example. Who more logical, apparently, than John Henry Newman, the coadjutor of Whately in his popular work on logic? His illogical conduct is, therefore, particularly instructive.

[1] The *thoroughly* informed of every creed are preserved from unbelief by an act of faith. Strange as their conduct often appears to the sceptic, it is rendered conscientious by this reliance on intuition rather than on reason. The whole question of the truth of beliefs hinges on whether intuition can or cannot be relied upon. We know that mistakes do occur through trusting to intuition, especially in the matter of beliefs; how, then, can we say that it is infallible?

In 1832, after a visit to Rome, he wrote describing the Roman Catholic religion as polytheistic, degrading, and idolatrous,[1] and then, after all, entered the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. He did so because he found that the difficulties of the creed and of the canon of Scripture were insurmountable unless over-ridden by the authority of the Church. To escape becoming an agnostic he elected to join a Church *calling* herself infallible.[2] He was able to come to this decision although, to his own knowledge, her infallibility was belied by her conduct! Further, so eloquent was his reasoning on the subject, so apparently logical, that some hundreds of clergymen joined him in making their submission to the Church of Rome. Underlying all this apparent inconsistency[3] is the assertion, so

[1] This description is borne out by the Rev. A. R. Robertson, D.D., in *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy* (Morgan & Scott), a book which was accorded a flattering reception in January, 1903, by the King of Italy. In Southern Italy the Church's methods remind one of what Paschal tells us concerning the Jesuits—how they kept men wicked, lest, if they became virtuous, the priests should lose their hold upon them.

[2] Cardinal Newman's opinions have a special interest for us at the present time. He held that, "*apart from an interior and unreasoned conviction, there is no cogent proof of the existence of God*"; that "the man who has not this interior conviction *has no choice but to remain an agnostic*, while the man who has it *is bound sooner or later to become a Roman Catholic*" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. "Newman, John Henry").

[3] So inexplicable did his motives appear that Charles Kingsley accused him of saying that "truth for its own sake need not be, and, on the whole, ought not to be, a virtue of the Roman clergy." Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, however, leaves no doubt of the author's own personal rectitude. His premises—the infallibility of conscience and intuition—were false. But that is not an unusual feature of Christian apologetics. The keen intellects of the two pious brothers, John Henry and Francis William, were really buried beneath a mass of preconceptions. That of the latter, however, being less submissive, proceeded to a slow and sure upheaval, and finally Francis Newman rejected Christianity altogether (see art. "Francis William Newman," by Francis Gribble, *The Fortnightly*, July, 1905). In the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* we find the key to Cardinal Newman's convictions. *He was intensely superstitious*, and inclined also to be timid.

eloquently pleaded by Cardinal Newman, of the supremacy of conscience and the correctness of intuition. So also have asserted the followers of every religion from all time, and to what have *their* consciences and intuitions led them—to truth, or to a *pot-pourri* of absurd and conflicting beliefs? We have "the testimony of all history to prove the extreme fallibility of conscience." Conscience possesses no divine spark to keep a man from acting wrongly through ignorance. Even when knowledge is present we see, as in Cardinal Newman's case, that the voice of conscience may still speak incorrectly; for reason is swamped when emotion's flood-gate is left ajar.

FREEWILL.

In my remarks on the "evil for which man is held responsible," I have alluded to the Rationalist's contention that man cannot be justly blamed for his actions, and that, if there be a God, He alone is to blame. This opens up the question of Freewill *v.* Determinism—a thorny question, which I should prefer, if only for considerations of space and my readers' patience, to leave severely alone. A whole volume would be necessary to present the case for Determinism adequately, and I am fully aware that a few brief words will fail to convince; but, if I can remove a single iota of the misconceptions on this subject, I shall feel rewarded.

Kant defines an act of volition to be an act which is determined by the anticipatory idea of the result of

On the opening page, where he gives the recollections of his boyhood, we read: "I used to wish the Arabian tales were true." And again: "I was very superstitious, and for some time previous to my conversion [when I was fifteen] used constantly to cross myself on going into the dark."

the act. Although he maintains that there must be a moral God, he fully admits that the forecast or anticipatory idea is the inevitable effect of precedent conditions, such as temperament (heredity), education (environment), and the like; and in a well-known passage he says that, if the whole history of the subject could be known, the voluntary acts of a man might be predicted with the same certainty as an eclipse. The tendency of modern psychology is in the same direction. All voluntary acts, we are told, depend on the memory of involuntary acts of the same sort previously performed. It is true that a few Christian psychologists leave room for a "sheer heave" of the will by means of which an idea naturally feeble is fortified and held in place; but when they speak in this wise they speak as metaphysicians. No metaphysical argument, it seems to me, can reconcile this inflexible causality with *true* freedom of will. If there be any freedom, it is so infinitesimal as to be a negligible quantity. There is, I grant, every appearance of free-will; but it belongs to the category of appearances which deceive.

The Determinism of science and the Freewill of metaphysics are essentially antagonistic. Determinism is completely subversive of Christian teaching. It is directly opposed to the tenth of the Thirty-nine Articles of religion. Not only does it imply that man is not to blame for his actions, but that, if there be a God, He, and He alone, is to blame. Christian theologists are therefore its strenuous opponents. In their apologetic efforts one finds the strangest misconceptions of what is meant in a broad sense by heredity and environment. The best apology I have seen so far is by the Rev. P. N. Waggett, in a little pamphlet

called *Science and Conduct*.[1] Father Waggett seems to realise better than most of his fellow-clerics the enormous influence of heredity and environment. Still he comes to the conclusion (he is bound to come to this conclusion if he is to remain a Christian) that moral change begins "when, under given circumstances," a man "does what, *under those circumstances*, and with his given constitution, he usually does not do." Surely this is just the very point that remains to be proved. Does he ever act in this way? He may appear to do so; but may not the sum-total of complex circumstances, connected with his temperament and environment, have led him to act in a manner which has all the outward appearance of being the result of an inward spring, of supernatural agency? The agnostic psychologist may be wrong, but the apologist has yet to prove that he is so.

Determinism is thought likely to corrupt our moral character. This is not the Determinist's experience. In some ways the doctrine of Determinism compares favourably with religious doctrines. The belief in God's omniscience leads the Mohammedan to fatalism, and the Christian to the doctrine of predestination. If a Christian really believes as he professes, if he could honestly subscribe to the seventeenth article of his Creed—in which it is stated that "before the foundations of the world were laid God hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us to deliver from curse and damnation *those whom He hath chosen* in Christ out of mankind"—there would indeed be "a dangerous downfall," thrusting men into desperation. The doctrine of predestination, therefore, appears,

[1] Being an address given at the Pusey House, Oxford.

without doubt, to be ethically mischievous. The doctrine of Determinism, on the other hand, teaches a man to fight pernicious hereditary instincts with the weapon of environment.

§ 5. *Religious Experience.*

MYSTICISM AND CONVERSION.

Of late, the argument from "Religious Experience" has been much to the front, and nothing written on the subject has created a deeper impression, or been more cordially welcomed by the supernaturalist, than Professor W. James's book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.[1] Professor James is a prominent member of the Society for Psychical Research, and no one is better able than he to give descriptions of psychic phenomena; but the conclusions he comes to as to the spiritual signification of some of them will strike the normal man as too absurd to be taken seriously. More than this. Indirectly he furnishes one of the very best weapons for attacking supernaturalism that has ever yet been put in the hands of the naturalist. I have already given some examples[2] of so-called religious experiences. These are still regarded by the superstitious as spiritual manifestations; but Mr. James discovers a spiritual interpretation in still more palpable hallucinations. Unwittingly he spoils the case for religious experience by trying to

[1] Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion, 1901–1902. Mr. James is of opinion that both the metaphysical argument for God's existence and the arguments for a God with moral attributes must be rejected, and "*the man who is sincere with himself and the facts*, but who remains religious still," must soothe "his perplexed and baffled intellect" with "a trustful sense of presence" (*Ibid*, pp. 445–8). A careful perusal of his book, however, makes it tolerably clear that this feeling of the presence of Spiritual Beings is simply an hallucination.

[2] Chapter II., pp. 67–70.

prove too much. I will give an instance. He describes how an intimate friend of his kept experiencing a "horrible sensation" of the presence of something, which he "did not recognise as any individual being or person." Mr. James admits that "such an experience as this does not connect itself with the religious sphere."[1] [Why not? It might have been the Devil that time.] Later on his friend had a pleasanter experience. "There was not a mere consciousness of something there, but, fused in the central happiness of it, a startling awareness of some ineffable good. Not vague either—not like the emotional effect of some poem or scent or blossom or music, but the sure knowledge of the close presence of a sort of mighty person; and, after it went, the memory persisted as the one perception of reality. Everything else might be a dream, but not that." Mr. James then remarks: "My friend, as it oddly happens, does not interpret these later experiences theistically, as signifying the presence of God." Why oddly? The explanation seems simple enough. It was just because his friend was not odd, but a normal individual of modern times. Perhaps, after all, the secret lay in the famous answer to the question, "Is life worth living?"—It all depends on the *liver*. One may also recall the words of the celebrated clerical wit who said: "They think they are pious when they are only bilious."

Mr. James then relates various experiences of other persons who, unlike his friend, were positive they *had* felt "the presence of God." And he tells us: "Nothing is more common in the pages of religious

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 60.

biography than the way in which seasons of lively and of difficult faith are described as alternating. Probably *every religious person* [the italics are mine] has the recollection of particular crises in which a direct vision of the truth, a direct perception, perhaps, of a living God's existence, swept in and overwhelmed the languor of the more ordinary belief."[1] If this sort of thing accounts for the faith of *every religious person*, the mystery (in these days) of the great faith of the few and the little faith of the many is completely solved. So few, relatively speaking, have this experience; so few are by nature mystics. Also it helps to explain the prevalence of supernatural belief in bygone ages. Thoughtful unbelievers have long ago come to the conclusion that some such psychical experiences account for religious superstitions, and now an eminent psychologist and religious apologist confirms their theories!

Mr. James argues that "the neurotic temperament naturally introduces one to regions of religious truth which are hidden from the robust Philistine type of nervous system, that thanks heaven it hasn't a single morbid fibre in its composition." This kind of robust Philistine is, one is glad to think, a very common type. I hope I am a fairly robust Philistine myself. The Rationalist may, or may not, be emotional; but

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 65. Mr. James proceeds: "In James Russell Lowell's correspondence there is a brief memorandum of an experience of this kind—'I had a revelation last Friday evening. I was at Mary's, and, happening to say something of the presence of spirits (of whom, I said, I was often dimly aware), Mr. Putnam entered into an argument with me on spiritual matters. As I was speaking, the whole system rose up before me like a vague destiny looming from the abyss. I never before so clearly felt the spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God. The air seemed to wave to and fro with the presence of something, I knew not what. I spoke with the calmness and clearness of a prophet.'"

he certainly prefers to be without morbid fibres. Why, of all the most undesirable states of mind, should morbidity assist the human being to have faith in God? Why should spirituality and strong faith be possible only for a person of nervous instability whose intellectual canon (unacknowledged no doubt) is "*Credo quia impossibile*"? Why, in the name of all that is reasonable, should spiritual experiences be the prerogative of exceptional temperaments only? Why, in all fairness, if there be any spiritual meaning in hallucinations, should not the Agnostic be at least vouchsafed the consciousness of the Devil's presence to cure him of his unbelief?

Mr. James thinks "there can be no doubt that as a matter of fact a religious life, exclusively pursued, does tend to make the person exceptional and eccentric." He refers to "geniuses in the religious line," who, "like many other geniuses.....have often shown symptoms of nervous instability." "Even more perhaps," he says, "than other kinds of genius, religious leaders have been subject to abnormal psychical visitations.....often, moreover, these pathological features in their career have *helped to give them their religious authority and influence.*" All this is exceedingly instructive, coming as it does from the mouth of an earnest champion of religion[1] specially suited, by his researches in psychical phenomena, to speak with authority on the psychology of religion. His belief in the interference in human life of spiritual agencies, and the whole tenour of his book, render it certain that he is not consciously bringing any

[1] In defining his philosophic position, however, he admits "his own inability to accept either *popular* Christianity or *scholastic* Theism." (See his "Postscript," p. 521.)

arguments to bear against supernaturalism, but, on the contrary, intends to adduce new arguments in its favour.

Have we not here a satisfactory and perfectly natural explanation of the phenomena of conversion? The religionist is apt, I think, to lose sight of the fact that conversion is not confined to any one particular creed; that it cannot witness to the truth of the one and not of the other. "The mystical feeling," remarks Professor James (pp. 425–6), "of enlargement, union, and emancipation.....is capable of forming matrimonial alliances with material furnished by the most diverse philosophies and theologies, provided only they can find a place in their framework for its peculiar emotional mood." The most striking examples of conversion are those of the instantaneous kind, of which St. Paul's is held out to us as the most eminent. I have already[1] outlined the probable explanation in St. Paul's case, and other cases may be similarly explained. The supernaturalist's interpretation of conversion cannot be considered seriously until proofs are forthcoming of an instance in which nothing was known previously of the truth alleged to have been revealed. Like Mr. Lowes Dickinson, I have never, for example, discovered a case in which a Mohammedan or a Hindoo, without having heard of Christianity, has had a revelation of Christian truth.

Professor James is not the only person having the curious notion that an abnormal state of mind admits the nearer presence of God. To take a people possessing a marvellous self-control over their emotions,

[1] Pp. 66–70.

and, therefore, the last among whom you would expect to find such ideas, I may mention that the more ignorant and superstitious among the Japanese throw themselves into hypnotic trances, and then fondly imagine that a god is present in their body, and is making use of them as a mouthpiece.[1] Again, no superstition is commoner among the ignorant natives of India, Mohammedan and Hindoo alike, than that people of unsound mind have some sort of special communication with God; but that educated persons, having fairly normal minds themselves, should hold such an opinion, is yet another example of the hallucinations to which religious enthusiasts are liable.

The folly of attributing any spiritual significance to these experiences will be better understood if we compare them with cases where there is no religious element whatsoever. A lady, a friend of mine, is continually subject to a curious experience, which may serve to illustrate this point. I give the account of it in her own words:—

As a child I was always a bad sleeper, and got into the habit of making up stories to amuse myself when lying awake in bed. This habit continued as I grew older; but, after a time, the stories ceased to be connected in any way with myself. Years ago I began a story which has grown gradually through three generations, and there are signs of the coming of a fourth. The old house has remained as the centre of the story for years; most of the characters are men, and no one of either sex bears any possible relationship to me. They have all become far more real to me than my own relations; at bed-time, on long railway journeys (sometimes), or when I am walking or doing needlework, they are there. If I get to the house at bed-time, I sleep well. If I am there when travelling, I don't get tired, and the characters grow and develop quite naturally. It is my inner life,

[1] In *Occult Japan*, by Percival Lowell (Riverside Press), there is an interesting account of these practices.

and, if I were given that way, it might become a series of visions. *I can quite understand men having ecstasies in which the ideals they have always before them become apparently materialised.*

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRAYER.

I cannot too strongly insist that all this is extremely instructive. It explains so many things that still have to be explained, if religion be untrue. The new science of psychology has already accounted for many abnormal phenomena that were formerly considered miraculous—"faith cures,"[1] for instance. Does it not account for the effects of prayer? We know nothing of the efficacy of prayer in securing material benefits —there is no proof either way; but we do know that it has often an ethical value, and is also a means of strengthening faith. Does it necessarily follow that a Supernatural Being hears and answers the suppliant's prayers? I think not. *Suggestion*, it is now known, exercises an extraordinary influence over the subjective mind. In prayer, auto-suggestion undoubtedly plays its subtle rôle.

Let me give some examples of the benign results that may be effected by suggestion without any appeal to the supernatural. Often a moral change for the worse in a most estimable person is distinctly traceable to causes over which he or she had no control, and the physician or surgeon, having diagnosed the case, proceeds to do his best to bring about a cure. Where it is some nervous malady, mental therapeutics

[1] The delusions of the "Christian Scientists" in mixing up religion with psychic healing can only be attributed to their ignorance of modern psychology. Those who know better, and are making money out of it, are as shamefully imposing upon the credulity of religious folk as is the Roman Catholic Church with her shrines of healing.

or psychic healing is sometimes extremely efficacious.[1] Vices and weaknesses are now looked upon by many in the light of diseases and ailments—curable, ameliorable, or incurable, as the case may be. Disease or Devil, the fact remains that medical treatment may effect a cure where the patient's disorder has been brought on by, as we say, his own fault. Dipsomania, morphinomania, kleptomania, nymphomania, satyriasis, and various moral perversions may yield to a purely natural treatment, whether it be the method of a Milne Bramwell (by *suggestion*) or of a Keeley.

When denouncing Mariolatry (in his sermon at the opening of the Church Congress, October, 1905), the Bishop of London said: "It is not revealed that the cry to any saint or to the Virgin Mary ever reaches them at all." Apparently, therefore, some of the Churches admit that appeals to the supernatural may be wasted, and this in spite of the suppliant being very much in earnest. Yet who would be prepared to say that the Roman Catholic who prays to the Virgin Mary and to innumerable saints does not derive quite as much benefit from the process as the Protestant who directs his worship solely to the Holy Trinity, or the Shintoist who invokes the benign spirits of his ancestors ?[2]

[1] In the December (1904) Journal of the S. P. R. a lady gives a vivid description of how she cured herself completely of certain nervous complaints by *auto-suggestion*. It is interesting to note that she says: "I did not believe in the efficacy of this treatment one bit; I just made myself do it; but I felt, most of the time, that it was extremely ridiculous."

[2] The following is from the Mikado's Rescript issued on the conclusion of peace:—"The result is due in a large measure to the benign spirits of our ancestors, as well as to the devotion and duty of our civil and military officials and the self-denying patriotism of all our people.....We are happy to invoke the blessing of the benign spirits of our ancestors." N.B.—The word "God" is conspicuous by its absence; "ancestors' spirits" take its place.

Again, putting aside abnormal phases of the mind, is it not, as Ralph Waldo Trine puts it (in his little book, *Character Building: Thought Power*), a simple psychological law that any type of thought, if entertained for a sufficient length of time, will, by and by, reach the motor tracts of the brain, and finally burst forth into action? There seems no need for the introduction of a supernatural hypothesis to explain the moral effect of prayer. So, also, with regard to faith, it is only natural that the believer, racked with doubt, should find reassurance in prayer.

The Theist who lays store by the evidence from "religious experience" will do well to ponder over the following words of one of Mr. James's critics: "Instead of producing anything that would strengthen the belief in extra-human spirit agents *influencing human destinies*, psychology has made intelligible, conformably to the rest of our organised knowledge, most, if not all, of the striking phenomena which have been the empirical props of the popular faith in spiritism, whether Christian or not. We refer to anæsthesias, analgesias, hallucinations, monitions, trances, the sense of illumination in ecstasy, etc., including the facts considered in Professor James's lectures. In making this statement, I do not forget the work of the Society for Psychical Research. Its achievements may be declared to have been so far, and without prejudice to the future, absolutely inconclusive with regard to spiritism."[1] In other words, psychical research, if conducted by the experimental method and without bias, may be pregnant

[1] *International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1904, p. 338, art. "Professor William James's Interpretation of Religious Experience," by James H. Leuba.

with consequences hardly in accord with the hopes of either the spiritist or spiritualist (in its religious sense). For, should abnormal phenomena of all kinds admit of a natural explanation, their present obscurity will no longer furnish grounds for supernatural speculation.

MUSIC AND THE EMOTIONS.

Are our emotions reliable guides, or are they not? I think not. Though the motive-power in our nature, though they go to make up that heart upon which Mr. Fielding so eloquently discourses in his *Hearts of Men*, they need to be carefully controlled by reason. They are the very same emotions which, in all but religious matters, are admittedly a fruitful source of self-deception. Take the emotion excited by music. I know many good people who think they possess considerable religious feeling, and have had a religious experience, because they are peculiarly affected by music, and especially by fine sacred music.[1] Similarly, Dr. Torrey's "Glory Song" appeals to the untrained ear of his emotional audiences, and the Salvation band, all out of tune, elevates the soul of the Salvationist. Yet lower down the scale of musical culture we find a clash of discordant sounds exciting the religious emotions of the savage. Is it too much to say that these "experiences" differ only in degree from those of the dog who howls as certain notes affect him? Granted that music, suited to the taste of the worshipper, is an aid to worship, we have to remember

[1] Do you know a hymn tune by Lord Crofton, set to the words, "Bless'd are the pure in heart"? When I first heard that tune played I shook with emotion. *I did not know at that time the words that the tune had been set to*; so it could only have been the music that affected me. At one time I confess that I myself used to mistake this hysterical element in my nature for religious fervour.

that there are those whose temperaments are so constituted that they are more or less unaffected by music —good, bad, or indifferent—and, if the religious feeling evoked be from God, we may ask in all reverence: "Why should the unmusical be debarred from this means of feeling His presence? Why should the man without a note of music in his composition have this much less chance of eternal salvation?" Surely we are not to take seriously and literally the words of our great philosopher-poet when he says: "Let no such man be trusted"?

Again, there is the religious feeling evoked by that strongest emotion of all—sexual love; the one excites the other, and the effect produced may be beneficial or may be mischievous. But sexual love appears to me a strange aid to the worship of *God;* and persons who really imagine they are nearer Him when in this state of emotion most certainly deceive themselves. The ascetic who is debarred from this particular "religious" experience should agree with me.

THE RELIGIOUS (?) EXPERIENCES OF INTOXICATION.

To return to Professor James's theory, it is the person who chances to have a well-developed subliminal life who is predestined to be saved; for then God[1] will be able to reach him. As Mr. James informs us that "nitrous oxide and ether, especially nitrous oxide, when sufficiently diluted with air, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree," so that "depth beyond depth of truth

[1] As already noted, Mr. James's own idea of God is not that of "popular Christianity or scholastic Theism." Also, "he feels bound to say that religious experience, as we have studied it, cannot be cited as unequivocally supporting the infinitist belief"—belief in "the 'god' of ordinary men." (See his "Postcript," p. 525.)

seems revealed to the inhaler,"[1] the unbelieving Philistine, in default of music having the desired effect, ought to be recommended to inhale this truth-revealing, and therefore faith-producing, gas. Like music, it must be meant as an aid to worship. The new beatitude will then be, as Mr. Leuba remarks: "Blessed are the intoxicated, for to them the kingdom of spirits is revealed!"[2] I can quite understand the interest aroused by Mr. James's remarkable book; but that Theists and would-be Theists should take its chief conclusion seriously is beyond me—or, rather, I should say it is one more proof to me that the inherited capacity for superstition is still strong within us. We can understand why supernatural beliefs die hard.

REVIVALISM.

An examination of religious experiences, however brief, cannot well omit all mention of the question of revivalism. Has it an ethical value? Has it a spiritual meaning? To the latter question the answer of the Church is for the most part in the affirmative. In his Pentecostal message last Whitsuntide the Archbishop of Canterbury refers, without directly naming them, to the extraordinary movement of which the young Evan Roberts has been the leader, and to the preaching of Messrs. Torrey and Alexander in London. "To whatever cause or combination of causes we may attribute it," he says, "the fact appears to be certain that expression has this year been given in an unusual degree to a desire for increased spiritual earnestness in the Christian life." I shall

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 387.
[2] *International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1904, p. 330.

not embark upon the question of the spiritual signification of revivalism. My remarks on other religious experiences may be taken to apply here also. Regarding its ethical value, I fancy most thoughtful onlookers will be with me when I say that it is unadvisable to stir up hysteria in hysterical people just for the sake of effects, the usefulness of which is extremely problematical—effects which, if they benefit a few, are harmful to the majority, and, in any case, are unlikely to be of a permanent nature. We have it on excellent authority that "emotional appeals and revivals do not destroy carnal sin in schools, and it is well known how often they seem to stimulate, to increase, immorality."[1]

I must now close this review of Theistic arguments, and pass on to consider certain popular arguments which often exercise a considerable influence in determining the attitude of the average man or woman towards religion in general, and Christianity in particular.

[1] The Ven. Archdeacon (now Canon) J. M. Wilson, D.D., late headmaster of Clifton College—in the *Journal of Education*, 1881.

POPULAR ARGUMENTS

Chapter VII.

FALLACIES IN POPULAR ARGUMENTS

§ 1. *Preliminary Remarks. The Power of Christianity for Good.*

Finally we have to consider some arguments that have often quite as much weight with the believer as Bible apologetics or Theistic proofs. They are: (1) The power of Christianity for good; (2) the marvellous spread of Christianity; (3) the witness of the Christian martyrs, and (4) the universality of the religious instinct. The first of these—the power of Christianity for good—opens up a large question,[1] and I have

[1] The following are a few notes of the sort of thing that requires satisfactory explanation if Christianity has been, and is, a power for good:—

1. *War.*—War and strife have not abated one whit. From the Crusades to the Crimea, religion has continually been either directly or indirectly the cause of war. Protestants, who may be ready to excuse the wars undertaken to drive the infidels from the "Holy Land," will do well to remember that Pope Innocent III., besides proclaiming the fifth of these crusades, proclaimed also the infamous crusade against the Albigenses (*who opposed the corruptions of the Church of Rome*), when Simon de Montfort and the Pope's legate, at the head of half a million of men, put to the sword friend and foe, men and women, saying, "God will find His own." In the case of that mischievous and unnecessary blunder, the Crimean War, the great masses of the Russian people saw but a spirited defence of the Cross against the Crescent, wherein, from their point of view, the infidel was being supported by renegade Christians. It was an appeal to the religious emotions—an insincere appeal, as history has discovered—of the Russian peasants that lent to the last Russo-Turkish war a fictitious popularity. Ministers of the gospel of peace and goodwill are often the worst offenders. (See remarks on "Peace" in Chap. VIII., § 4.)

2. *Persecution.*—I recommend to the apologist the latest work on *Religious Persecution*, by E. S. P. Haynes (Duckworth). With regard

thought it advisable, therefore, to select for special investigation two popular beliefs springing from this source—namely, the belief that woman owes her present position to Christianity, and the belief that the overthrow of Christianity would endanger society and the nation. The point now under consideration is not whether Christianity *ought* to have been, but whether it *has* been, a power for good. Although the apologist, when hard pressed as to this or that evidence of failure, attributes it to the fault of man, he nevertheless continues stoutly to maintain that Christianity has indeed worked wonders for mankind. This we should certainly expect of it, if it be a true belief; but it is a claim that I wish to look into a little more closely.

It would be a comparatively easy, though lengthy,

to *Torture*, few realise that this favourite method for overcoming the scruples of the heretic was used in England so late as 1640.

3. *Slavery.*—Serfdom in England was only fully extinguished in 1600, and the Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies was only passed in 1833. For eighteen long centuries Christianity countenanced the atrocious inhumanities of the slave trade. The very irons used by the native chiefs for shackling the prisoners when handing them over to the Christian traders, were made in Birmingham (Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 347).

4. *Sexual Immorality.*—The frightful immorality at one time prevailing among the priests and votaries of the Christian Church, owing to her teaching regarding marriage, is notorious. Sin was even encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church in order to fill her coffers and maintain her hold. Can we say that the average level of morality has been raised in countries where belief is strongest? Again, is it not notorious that the introduction of Christianity among savage nations has synchronised with their degradation?

5. *Inhumanity.*—Massacres like those at Kishineff and in other parts of the Russian Empire, and atrocities like those in the Congo.

6. *Our Slums.*

7. Generally, answers are required to the Rationalist's arguments as set forth, for instance, in Mr. James Cotter Morison's book, *The Service of Man*, or as briefly sketched in Mr. Joseph McCabe's paper, "The Service of Man," in *Christianity and Rationalism on Trial* (Watts, 6d.), and in the chapter on "Christianity and Ethics" in Mr. Robert Blatchford's *God and My Neighbour.*

task to make out an exceedingly strong case against Christianity by enlarging upon the inhumanity and immorality of the Dark Ages, and comparing this with the far more humane and moral conduct of men in pre-Christian civilisations. One could point to the rock-graven edicts of King Asoka (263–226 B.C.), and show that in the matter of discountenancing slavery, of humanity to prisoners, of denouncing war, of founding hospitals, of abolishing blood sacrifices, of inculcating religious toleration, and of teaching purity of life, all that is now so complacently claimed for Christianity was anticipated. Or again, one might dwell on the dark side of Christendom, even in this year of grace, 1906, and draw some very odious comparisons, especially as we have so recently been presented with the object-lesson of a heathen race which excels many, and equals any, of the Christian races in nearly all those virtues we prize and call Christian.[1] But I have no intention of embarking upon such a wide sea of controversy.

One controversial subject, however, I feel bound to notice, because the disputed point is at the root of

[1] In the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1905, there is an article contributed by the editor which deserves the earnest attention of all thoughtful men. It is entitled "Moral Supremacy of Christendom." The following quotations from it will suffice to show the far-reaching importance of the questions it raises: "Christendom, as a whole, long accustomed to treat all pagan races as morally inferior to herself, now stands confronted by a non-Christian civilisation, of vast power and splendid promise, whose claim to moral equality, at least, cannot be disregarded, except by those who are morally blind.....The hold of Christianity upon the peoples of the Western world is rooted in the conviction that *this is the religion which produces the best men.* To a greater degree than is commonly recognised, each Church or sect of Christendom thus derives its confidence from the final court of ethical appeal. Whatever ground be alleged for a given doctrine, whether of Scripture, authority, or reason, the argument would instantly lose its force if it were to appear that the ethical result of denying the doctrine was superior to that which followed its acceptance."

the whole matter. We are so accustomed to hear every humane or unselfish deed, and every moral act, described as Christian, that "good" and "Christian" have almost become synonymous terms. It never occurs to us to ask, or we never give a second thought to the question, how much the humane principles now accepted among civilised nations may be due to education, experience, and evolution, and how much to Christian influence. The Rationalist attributes the improvement chiefly to the former, and, in any case, to the working of natural forces; the Christian chiefly to the latter, and, in any case, to the working of supernatural forces. All that is beneficial in civilisation, both on its material and on what is called its spiritual side, is placed by the Christian to the credit of Christianity, and the hand of God is traced with becoming reverence in every discovery which ameliorates our lot. This, although the promoters and discoverers are often non-Christians, and although it is well known that it is the Church that has chiefly delayed the advance of civilisation. The latter is a grave truth yet awaiting a satisfactory explanation. As late as 1846 Cobden writes to a friend on the subject of national education: "I took the repeal of the Corn Laws as light amusement compared with the difficult task of inducing the priests of all denominations to agree to suffer the people to be educated." Again, Lord Macaulay, speaking of the Roman Catholic Church, in the first chapter of his *History of England*, says that "during the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite

of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power. The loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor."

Again, taking morality in a more restricted sense, let us assume that there has been moral development in Christendom, and let us assume also that this has nothing to do with the advance of Humanitarianism in the present, or with pre-Christian (Buddhist, for instance) teaching in the past. Are we to conclude that this is a proof of the divine origin of Christianity? Christian teaching embodies precepts of the greatest ethical value (borrowed, as we now know, from the principles of ancient ethical teachers). Would it not indeed be strange if this teaching had done no good whatever —if the leaven had had no elevating influences at all, while the teaching of Confucius and Buddha have produced those admirable results which even Christians are at last prepared to admit?[1] I must confess I fail to see how we can say that any improvement[2] there may be in the matter of coarse vice among the proletariat, of dishonesty among the commercial classes, of corruptness among the professional, of sensuality among the leisured classes, can be any proof that Jesus, one of the reformers, was God Incarnate.

Let us now quit generalisation, and investigate in some detail an important Christian argument which

[1] Dr. Warschauer explains in *Anti-Nunquam*, p. 72, that Agnostics are good men, "because, willingly or unwillingly, they have taken in Christian ideas through every pore." How does he explain, I wonder, the virtues of the Japanese?

[2] The Archdeacon of Birmingham (now Bishop of Carlisle) told the Coldstream Guards last January that Christianity had been a "dismal failure."

has the contention of Christianity's power for good as its source. It forms a striking illustration of the way fallacies may arise from a hard-and-fast adhesion to contentions that are justified rather by the heart than by history.

§ 2. *Christianity Woman's Best Friend.*[1]

The majority of women still remain true believers. There appear to be numerous reasons, psychological and educational, for their attitude. Woman is more imaginative, more emotional, and more sensitive to external *suggestion*[2] than man. As to her education, men, even men who have no religious belief whatever, prefer to keep her in ignorance of their views, partly under a vague notion that unbelief would undermine her virtue and lessen her amiability, and partly because they deem her religious influence an essential element in the upbringing of their children. In addition to all this, woman is taught by the Church that Christianity is her best friend. Prominent prelates of the Church proclaim that "the Gospel has given woman the position she holds to-day."[3] Nothing could very well be more contrary to fact. One can only suppose that these expounders of the truth are speaking according to the dictates of their hearts, and without having really studied the question, or else that they believe their cause is served by deliberately closing their eyes to inconvenient facts. The question is one of supreme importance, as it is chiefly women who are now the mainstay of the Faith.

[1] As remarked by the Bishop of London in a sermon at Westminster Abbey. See cover of Mr. Guy Thorne's book, *When it was Dark.*

[2] See p. 317.

[3] Quoted from an address delivered by the Bishop of London at St. Paul's, as reported in the *Church Times* of October 7th, 1904.

People with little or no knowledge of those portions of history that specially bear upon the question are easily deceived. The average woman's ideas concerning the pre-Christian civilisations are decidedly vague. Her ideas may also be further confused by lurid accounts from the pulpit of the licentiousness prevalent among the upper classes during the earlier years of the Roman Empire; while nothing is told her about the unrestrained licence of the aristocracy during the Middle Ages, and the degraded condition of the masses during, say, the eighteenth century.[1] What, then, is the true picture? That I shall now try to depict.

At a time when the men of the "Chosen People" were insulting and unjust to their women, heathen women enjoyed a position which their Christian, not to mention their Mohammedan, descendants might well envy. Not until near the middle of the nineteenth century did that movement commence which has radically improved, and will still continue to improve, the position of women. Consider the following descriptions, one of 2,000 B.C., and the other of A.D. 1850.

Picture I.—Two thousand years before the Christian era "woman was more free and more honoured in Egypt than she is in any country of the world to-day. She was the mistress of the house.[2].....She inherited equally with her brothers, and had full control of her property. She could go where she liked, or speak with whom she liked. She was 'juridically the equal of man,' says M. Paturet, 'having the same rights

[1] "When," says Sir Walter Besant, "for drunkenness, brutality, and ignorance the Englishman of the baser kind reached the lowest depth ever reached by civilised man."

[2] We learn this from reliable sources—for example, from W. M. Flinders Petrie and Gaston Camille Charles Maspéro, the celebrated English and French Egyptologists.

and being treated in the same fashion'; and the same authority observes that it was not as mother, but as woman, as a being equal in dignity, that she was thus honoured. There was polygamy[1] in theory, but the first wife was generally able to exact conditions in her marriage contract which effectually prevented it. The inscriptions show, says Maspéro, that she remained to the end of her life 'the beloved of her husband and the mistress of the house.'"[2] Or take the status of women among the "barbarians," vouched for by the Romans, their enemies, and therefore unexceptionable witnesses. Nothing impressed the Romans more than the equality of the sexes among the northern nations, the man's reverence for womanhood, the woman's sympathy with manhood, and the high code of morality that was the natural outcome of this well-balanced state of society.[3]

Picture II.—In enlightened Boston, about 1850 (under English Common Law), woman could not hold any property, either inherited or earned. A woman, either married or unmarried, could hold no office of trust or power. She was not recognised as a citizen. The status of a married woman was little better than that of a domestic servant. By the English Common

[1] "Polygamy only began to disappear among the Jews in the fifth century B.C., and so curious was the influence of the Old Testament on the early Christian Church that several of the Fathers could not bring themselves to condemn it, and it was not officially suppressed by the Church until A.D. 1060. Luther and the Reformers allowed it even later. [May we not excuse Mohammed, therefore, for permitting polygamy?] Yet polygamy was one of the surest signs of a contempt of woman, and it had been rejected by Greeks, Romans, and barbarians long before the Hebrews began to perceive its enormity." (A footnote p. 37 of *The Religion of Woman.*)

[2] *The Religion of Woman*, by Joseph McCabe, p. 14.

[3] For an illustration from the Far East, kindly peruse note 2, pp. 292–3, at the close of this section.

Law her husband was her lord and master. He had the sole custody of her person and of her children while minors. He could punish her "with a stick no thicker than his thumb," and she could not complain against him. He was the owner of all her real estate and of her earnings. She had no personal rights, and "could hardly call her soul her own." Her husband could steal her children, rob her of her clothing, neglect to support the family: she had no legal redress.[1]

And who took the chief, and, in the initial stage, the only, part in the reform movement? *Freethinkers.* Who were silent when they were not active opponents? *The clergy.* "It was just those who most radically abandoned Christianity—Owen, Holyoake, and Mill—that were the most logical and ungrudging in their plea for woman. It was the Mary Wollstonecrafts, Harriet Martineaus, Frances Wrights, George Eliots, Helen Taylors, and Annie Besants that distinguished themselves by fearlessness and unselfishness."[2] "The clergy never *discovered* any injustice to woman; and only one in a thousand could see it when it was pointed out.....All honour to the memory of those clergymen who, like Kingsley and Farrar, protested against the injustice to the full extent of their idea of womanhood."[3] "On the Continent there has been the same story of general clerical opposition and general heterodox support."[4] "Mr. Pinchwife,"[5] too, has

[1] Quoted on p. 15 of *The Religion of Woman*, from vol. iii., p. 290, of Mrs. Cady Stanton's *History of Women's Suffrage.*

[2] *The Religion of Woman*, p. 105. [3] *Ibid*, p. 111.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 107, where the author supports this statement by examples.

[5] Pinchwife, it will be remembered, is the anxious husband (in Wycherley's comedy, *The Country Wife*) who held that a woman is innocent in proportion to her lack of knowledge. There are, of course, other reasons why a wife's ignorance is deemed desirable. *Cf.* "And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate."

undoubtedly had a hand in the subjection of woman; but we are investigating the ground for the contention that Christianity has laid on woman a burden of gratitude, and that, if Christianity were overthrown, women would sink into unknown depths of degradation. Do the above-stated *facts* bear out that contention?

The question arises: "Why has Christianity stood in the way of woman's cause?" The answer is simple enough: "Christianity, in adopting the Old Testament, adopted with it the Hebrew conception of woman." Her inferiority to man was established by her origin from his *rib* and the leading part she took in his *fall*. The Vicar of Crantock tabulates[1] the reasons why a Christian woman should cover her head in church, as follow:—

(1) Man's priority of creation. Adam was first formed, then Eve.
(2) The manner of creation. The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man.
(3) The purport of creation. The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.
(4) Results in creation. The man is the image of the Glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.
(5) Woman's priority in the Fall. Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.
(6) The marriage relation. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands.
(7) The headship of man and woman. The head of every man is Christ, but the head of the woman is man.

The Jews' idea of a woman was sanctioned by no less an authority than Jehovah; nor did the Christ of the Gospels give one word of clear guidance on this or any other social problem, or enter one word of explicit protest against the injustice of the Judaic

[1] In his sermon at St. Crantock's on August 27th, 1905.

treatment of women. Again, the teaching of St. Paul was based on the Old Testament, and the teaching of the Fathers was based on the Old Testament and St. Paul. A few quotations[1] from the sayings of some of these Fathers, whose contempt of marriage became one of the great errors of the Church, may be instructive:—

Fornication is a lapse from one marriage into many.—*Clement of Alexandria.*

Digamists (widowers who re-marry) are saved in the name of Christ, but are by no means crowned by him.—*Origen.*

Second marriage is "a decent sort of adultery."—*Athenagoras.*

It was no part of God's primitive design that the race should be continued by sexual union. Marriage is the outcome of sin.—*St. Gregory of Nyssa* (a married bishop).

Blessed is the one who leads a celibate life, and soils not the divine image within him with the filth of concupiscence.

Fierce is the dragon, and cunning the asp;
But woman has the malice of both.
—*St. Gregory of Nazianzum.*

Why was woman created at all?—*St. Augustine.*

Thou art the devil's gate, the betrayer of the tree, the first deserter of the divine law!

Marriage is not far removed from fornication.—*Tertullian.*

She is more fitted for bodily work....Remember that God took a rib out of Adam's body, not a part of his soul, to make her.

She was not made to the image of God, like man.—*St. Ambrose.*

Woman is the root of all evil.—*St. Jerome.*

At the Council of Auxerre, in 578, the bishops forbade women, on account of their "impurity," to take the sacrament in their hands as men did.

If women only knew of these sayings, would they approve of the "appeal to the first six centuries"?

Bad as the position of woman was under the influence of the early Church teaching, it was, in many respects, still worse during the Middle Ages. "Life-long seclusion in the inner apartments of the house

[1] In *The Religion of Woman.*

of a man she has not chosen, or internment in a nunnery—that is, either degraded or unnatural—is the choice (within limits) of the daughter of the wealthy. Life-long drudgery, with few and coarse pleasures, with a long vista of sticks and whips, and scold's bridles, and ducking stools, with, perhaps, the brutal 'ordeal' on the slightest suspicion, or the ghastly death of the witch, is the prospect of the daughter of the poor."[1] Even the Reformation altered more than it improved the condition of woman. How could it be otherwise when the Reformers were nothing if not Bibliolaters?

Of the movement for the betterment of woman's position that eventually took place, not by the aid, but in spite of, the Church, I have already spoken. All the evidence we possess regarding the history of Heathendom and Christendom conclusively shows that Christianity has done much to lower, and but little to elevate, the position of women. Should I have succeeded in arousing the interest of my gentle readers, or should they wish to verify my statements, I implore them to read well-known works of competent authorities on this subject.[2] The astounding,

[1] *The Religion of Woman*, p. 78.

[2] Let them read, for instance, Mill's *Subjection of Women*. Also, they will obtain much useful information on this and other little-known history in Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe* and his *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*; Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*; the chapter concerning women in Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law*; Mrs. Cady Stanton's *History of Woman's Suffrage*; *British Freewomen*, by Charlotte Stopes. As specially bearing on the subject under discussion, and not a costly book, let them read the work that I have been quoting from so freely, J. McCabe's *The Religion of Woman*. They may disagree with the advanced *opinions* of the author, but that need not debar them from gleaning a vast store of useful *facts*. Finally, these words of Professor Jinzo Naruse (see chapter xxi., on "The Position of

but apparently prevalent, idea, that woman is only secured by Christianity from the brutal assaults of man, will appear in the next argument we are about to consider.

Women," in Mr. Stead's recent publication, *Japan by the Japanese*), the founder of the first University for women in Japan, should provide food for thought for those clerics who still maintain, and unconsciously mislead their congregations with, this preposterous argument for Christianity. "The part women played in Old Japan," writes the Professor, "was very remarkable, especially *before* the arrival of Buddhism and Confucianism. Men and women were almost equal in their social position. There was then no shadow of the barbarous idea that men were everything and women nothing. Women's power even in politics was great, and history tells us that there were nine women who ascended the throne in olden times. Women in general were not inferior to men physically, mentally, or morally. They were noted for their bravery, and distinguished themselves on the field of battle. In the literary world they were not less noted for their brilliant productions. Their moral conduct was most blameless, and commanded universal respect. Their natural temperament was cheerful and optimistic, and charmed the sterner sex. Such being the attainments and characteristics of women in olden times, we can fairly believe that they were as well educated as men were, although there were not existing any institutions of instruction for women. This was the springtime of Japanese womanhood, when it blossomed undisturbed, and exerted a strong and beneficial influence on the life of old Japan. The introduction of Buddhism and Confucianism, however, began to create great changes in the position of women. And yet so powerful were women in society when these two religions came to Japan that their rapid spread in our country was due to the earnest endeavours of women." Speaking of the feudal age, he remarks: "The social environment of the age and the prevalence of Buddhism and Confucianism worked hand in hand to bring about the subjection of women." The analogy between the experiences of the Japanese lady and her European sister is a striking one. There is an analogy, too, between the conduct of the Buddhist priests and that of the Roman Catholic priests in the Middle Ages, or even in Southern Italy to-day. "The sins of the present generation of priests," said Count Okuma in the course of an interview, "are many, and the hells about which they preach are prepared for the like of them" (p. 31 of Mr. Moore's *The Christian Faith in Japan*). The majority of the priests are utterly degenerate and hopelessly ignorant (*ibid*, p. 129).

§ 8. *The Overthrow of Christianity would Endanger Society and the Nation.*

I have already[1] commented on the opinion prevalent in England (and in some other, but not all other, Christian countries) that the overthrow of Christianity would endanger the nation; that, to quote Canon Henson, "the real elements of the Christian Faith are those that have made European nations the most powerful in the world."[2] (This with the object-lesson of Holy Russia and heathen Japan staring him in the face!) Many go still farther and prophesy absolute chaos. People who have been imbued with the Church's teaching, and who have spent their lives in Christian surroundings, are naturally convinced that belief and morality are indissoluble partners—that Christianity is a power for good in this respect above all others. Therefore, when Professor Flint says, "It [the Christian Faith] could not be displaced without shaking society from top to bottom,"[3] he expresses a very popular opinion among believers and semi-believers. Even among Agnostics[4] there are many who, while recognising the fallacy so far as they

[1] Chapter I., pp. 10, 11.

[2] In his *Notes on Popular Rationalism*.

[3] *Anti-Theistic Theories*, Lecture 5, on Comte's Positivist Philosophy.

[4] Both Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold, for example, thought the world at large stood in peril of a moral collapse, while, as Matthew Arnold puts it, "the old (theologically-derived) sanction of conduct is out of date, and the new is not yet born." "Few things can happen more disastrous," writes Herbert Spencer, "than the decay and death of a regulative system no longer fit, before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it" (see preface, dated July, 1879, to *The Data of Ethics*). It is for reasons such as these that so many Agnostics still lend their moral support to the Churches; for men rightly uphold what they deem essential to the well-being of the race, whether it be Christ-worship in England or ancestor-worship in Japan.

themselves are concerned, still seem to consider that society would be insufficiently protected from criminals by its own instinct of self-preservation, and that, to maintain order among the masses, the hand of the law must, for the present, be strengthened by appeals to a supernatural sanction of conduct. This deeply-rooted conviction regarding belief and conduct has been partially considered in the first section of this chapter, and, the subject being one of the greatest importance, I am devoting to its consideration a portion of the concluding chapter of this book. I am now confining myself to the warning given to us by the Church and the pious laity—that we must expect nothing less than chaos should the Resurrection, and along with it, of course, the whole fabric of Christianity, be ultimately disproved.

This view has been illustrated in Mr. Guy Thorne's book, *When it was Dark*. The book may be seen on every bookstall, has had an extraordinary sale,[1] and has been much appreciated by many pious-minded persons (especially by those of the High Church persuasion, the book being written by a partisan of that cult). The anti-Christian propagandist is here represented as *knowing* that Christ is God; but, for some unexplained and exceedingly mysterious reason, utilising a huge fortune and a powerful intellect in unscrupulous endeavours to spread disbelief. He is a deceiver of mankind, a genuine Satan in human shape. He leads the life of an ascetic, so the usual[2] grounds

[1] 137,000 of the popular edition by October, 1905.

[2] *How* usual the following quotations will exemplify. The Rev. W. A. Whitworth, preaching (at All Saints', Margaret Street, on Sunday, February 12th, 1905) to a large congregation (of ladies), remarked that "irreligious men had morals, but that they were only the morals of society, and secretly they indulged themselves in the

given for disbelief are removed. With the assistance of another man (a real villain, this time, of the lowest type), *one of the greatest savants of the day*, a gigantic fraud is perpetrated,[1] and the Resurrection thereby definitely disproved. Immediately an epidemic of crime breaks out among *quondam* Christians, which nothing can quell. The restraints of order are paralysed, and the criminal element is rampant. The violence and viciousness of *men* were, please to note, specially directed against the weaker sex, who had to keep at home and bar the door. Not only Agnostics, but any who happened to differ in their views from this champion of Christianity, come in for a share of his invective.[2] The wonder is how an author of his

vilest passions." Again, the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, in his pamphlet, *Atheism and Faith*, represents the Atheist in the guise of the Tempter "holding out the bribe of free indulgence of all the passions to our youth, our working classes, our governing classes, and our capitalists." Clergymen who speak with such bitterness and make such sweeping assertions really betray the weakness of their own case. For it is a psychological fact that men are always angriest when they know they are not quite in the right. It is also a statistical fact (so far as statistics can be relied upon for facts) that crime among disbelievers is proportionately small, while among the staunchest believers, the Roman Catholics, it is proportionately large.

[1] I do not believe there is an Agnostic in the world who would descend to forgery in order to promote his cause. Could one say this of every believer, even in the twentieth century?

[2] Religious animus, even in a country priding itself on its tolerant spirit, has by no means burnt itself out. (Do we not see it flaring up again in the "War of the Kirks" and the Education Controversy?) One of the arguments for the retention of the Athanasian Creed is that it was specially introduced for "those who turn away from the life-giving revelation of God in His Eternal Son." The curses are reserved, it seems, not for the man who is born of heathen parents, but for the man who, often with much uprooting of his dearest hopes, and at the cost of losing many friends and even his original means of livelihood, decides that he must forsake the Faith. It seems to me that, before converting the heathen, it would be only fair that the terrible fate they will incur by any subsequent recantation should be distinctly explained to them.

ability could be capable of penning such an effusion, and that it can be read and appreciated, as it undoubtedly has been by many excellent persons of his way of thinking, only shows how easily bias may cloud the intellect.

According to Mr. Guy Thorne and the admirers of his book, the Christian races are innately far worse than Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics—far worse, indeed, than savages and animals—for they are only held in check from the commission of the vilest excesses by their belief in the Resurrection. It requires an effort to understand how this book can appeal to anyone, least of all to one of the chief dignitaries of the Church; but there, conspicuously printed on the cover, we are treated to an extract from his sermon in praise of the book.[1]

Chaos and crime were rife in certain cities in Russia and Poland lately. What was the cause? Unbelief? Was it not rather the result of the cruel laws and despicable methods of a Christian government, aided by Christian butchers, calling themselves soldiers, and by a Christian hooligan element such as it would be hard to find outside a Christian city. This chaos occurred, mind you, under a powerful Christian theocratic government; and the head of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, was one of the prime

[1] The actual words of the Bishop of London are: "I wonder whether any of you have read that remarkable work of fiction entitled *When it was Dark*? It paints, in wonderful colours, what it seems to me the world would be if for six months, as in the story is supposed to be the case, owing to a gigantic fraud, the Resurrection might be supposed never to have occurred, and, as you feel the darkness creeping round the world, you see how woman in a moment loses the best friend she ever had, and crime and violence increase in every part of the world." No wonder women cling to the Christian Faith when they are taught such cogent reasons for doing so.

movers. The terrible atrocities of which the unfortunate Jews have been the victims were undoubtedly connived at by the authorities, and inhuman crimes have been perpetrated by Christians that would be impossible in humane Japan. The policy of keeping the masses steeped in the grossest superstitions of the orthodox Church is now bearing fruit, adding to the chaos and bloodshed and hindering the work of reform. It is belief, not unbelief, that has played a leading part in creating this chaos, and in stirring up man's cruelest passions.

As to the safety of women (in the event of the resurrection being discredited), where in civilised Christendom, may I ask, could a lady be left for days and nights alone in a tent or open house? She *can* be, in the Indian jungle or in the Australian bush. For such protection as may there be necessary (and the open house testifies how little it is required) she relies upon her heathen servants. Almost the only danger in India is from religious fanatics, and in Australia from Christian criminals. In what Christian country would it be safe to have paper windows and walls, as in Japan? My wife and I slept in strange, out-of-the-way native hotels in Japan in perfect security, though a would-be criminal had only to tear through a thin piece of paper! Belief in the resurrection is rapidly decaying in France to-day. Are cases of assault on women any the more prevalent on that account? If belief in the resurrection is so essential, how comes it that we have allied ourselves to a heathen nation, and made friends with another that is fast giving up this belief?

§ 4. *The Spread of Christianity a Proof of its Truth.*

"What then," asks[1] the Rev. Prebendary W. A. Whitworth, "was the original gospel of power which overran the world with such astonishing success?" The spread of Christianity is thought by nearly all good Christians to have been marvellous. Was it? This is the question we have next to consider. In the first place, let us see what we are told on this point by recognised theologians. In his book, *The Bible in the Church*,[2] we are reminded by the learned Dr. Westcott, the late Bishop of Durham, that the dispersion of the Jews exercised a great influence upon the spread of Christianity. "The pagans got the idea of monotheism, while the Jews themselves dropped the idea of a 'kingdom' and substituted a 'faith.'" He also reminds us of the broad unity of the Roman Empire, and of the dispersion of the Jews being co-extensive with its limits, and concludes that "during the lifetime of St. Paul every condition was realised for proclaiming the Gospel to the world." "Without such preparation," he says, "the spread of Christianity would be *historically inconceivable*, and it is a remarkable example of Divine Providence." Here, then, we have an admission of purely natural causes, and, although the believer may be able to look upon them with reverence, as Providential, he can hardly claim them to be at the same time a witness to the *power* of the Gospel. Also, we shall see that there were many other natural causes at work, and that among them were some which the pious would be the last to connect with a Divine Providence.

[1] In the *Nineteenth Century and After*, November, 1904.
[2] Chapter i.

Historians find that the rapidity of the spread has been much exaggerated,[1] and that it was not until the Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325[2] that the spread commenced to emerge from insignificance. Even then the adhesion to the new Faith was for a long period of a purely nominal character, the unwilling converts remaining, to all intents, pagans after they were baptised. This is freely admitted by Churchmen acquainted with that portion of history. Nor is this all. The prevailing ignorance and superstition were taken advantage of by the propagators of the Gospel, and frauds freely perpetrated.[3] Again, "edicts of toleration removed the

[1] The spread of Christianity was for a long time confined to cosmopolitan trading towns only, the villagers remaining pagans—hence the name. Why should townfolk have been thus specially favoured by God? The Roman Empire passed its zenith in the first half of the second century—under Stoics. Historians agree that it was declining all through the third century. On the other hand, it was making fresh progress morally in the fourth century. It deteriorated morally after A.D. 380–90, the date of the triumph of Christianity! Do these facts bear out the Christian contention that Christianity purifies empire?

[2] N.B.—After nearly 300 years. Compare the rise of Babism, p. 304. No hopes of wealth and honours, no imperial edicts, assisted the spread of Babism. Quite the reverse.

[3] See pp. 93, 106, 176, and 181. Various authorities for this statement will be found in *Bible Myths*, pp. 434–40—*e.g.*, Mosheim, the distinguished German Protestant ecclesiastical historian and theologian, says: "It was held as a maxim that it was not only lawful, but praiseworthy, to deceive, and even to use the expedient of a lie, in order to advance the cause of truth and piety" (vol i., p. 198). Isaac de Casaubon, the famous classical scholar and Protestant theologian, a prebendary of Canterbury and a pensioner of King James I., says: "It mightily affects me to see how many there were in the earliest times of the Church who considered it as a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truths the help of their own inventions, in order that the new doctrine might be more readily allowed by the wise among the Gentiles." Besides forging and lying for the cause of Christ, the Christian Fathers destroyed all evidence against the Christian religion which they came across. The most lamentable instance of this is, of course, the wilful destruction of the valuable library in the temple of Serapis by Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria. Shortly after this event Saint Cyril succeeded to the bishopric, and then followed the murder

temporal disadvantages which had hitherto retarded the progress of Christianity."[1] When this failed, Church and State had recourse to persecution,[2] quite as cruel as, and on a scale that far exceeded, the persecution of the early Christians by the heathen. Why did the Emperor Constantine embrace Christianity? Was it not mainly because he believed that it had a power to wipe away his own heinous crimes?[3] Although he acknowledged the Faith, he put off his baptism till he was on his death-bed, in order that he might continue to lead a wicked life as long as possible.[4]

of the unfortunate Hypatia by the hand of Peter the Reader. It is on these Christian Fathers and *Saints* that we are depending for the correct transmission to us of the Christian traditions!

[1] See Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. iii., p. 27 (ed. 1809). After the Emperor Constantine had been converted, "the cities which signalised a forward zeal, by the voluntary destruction of their temples, were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donations."

[2] For instance, the Emperor Theodosius, at the suggestion of the ecclesiastics who governed his conscience, promulgated, in the space of fifteen years (A.D. 380–394), "at least fifteen severe edicts against the heretics, more especially against those who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity" (Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. iv., p. 21). Buddhism, on the contrary, unlike Christianity and Mohammedanism, was promulgated without persecution, and spread far more rapidly than Christianity. In his apologetic work, *Anti-Theistic Theories*, Dr. Flint refers to Buddhism thus: "The very marvellous system of thought called Buddhism, which originated in India about 500 years B.C., has spread over a greater area of the earth and gained more adherents than even Christianity, and by peaceful means—by the power of persuasion—not by the force of arms, not by persecution." (See Lecture vii.)

[3] His victims were: his father-in-law (A.D. 310); sister's husband (314); nephew (319); wife (320); former friend (321); sister's husband (325); own son (326). "The old age of Constantine was disgraced by the opposite, yet reconcileable, vices of rapaciousness and prodigality" (Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. ii., p. 337, ed. 1809). "The gratitude of the Church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world" (*ibid*, vol. iii., p. 27). That this man should have exercised so great an influence upon the spread of Christianity is indeed "a *remarkable* example of Divine Providence."

[4] The death-bed baptism of Constantine is described by Eusebius, the Bishop of Cæsarea, in his *Life of Constantine*, bk. iv., chaps. 61, 62, 63, and 64. The Bishop assumes the salvation of Constantine with the

As an instrument for spreading God's word he is even worse than that royal adulterer and murderer whom we are asked to look upon as a prototype of Christ and his prime ancestor. On all these matters of history the learned Bishop Westcott is silent, although, as examples of Divine Providence, they would appear sufficiently remarkable.

There was yet another, and possibly the chief, cause for the ultimate spread of Christianity. I have already[1] described and commented upon the various Rationalistic theories concerning the growth of Christian beliefs. Not only from these anti-Christian theories, but also from the admissions of apologists concerning them, it appears that Christianity gained ground, not so much because there was something new either in its dogma or in its promise, but rather because these were so closely paralleled in many pagan cults.[2] Have we not here the main factor in the growth of Christianity? I cannot find that Bishop Westcott recognises this as a part of the preparation in which the hand of God can be traced; but advanced apologists very largely do so now, and hence the precious theory of progressive revelation.

We may now pass on to another very popular argument.

§ 5. *The Noble Army of Martyrs.*

My allusions to religious persecutions may remind

utmost confidence, and says: "He was removed about mid-day to the presence of his God, leaving his mortal remains to his fellow-mortals, and carrying into fellowship with God that part of his being which was capable of understanding and loving Him."

[1] In Chapter IV., on Comparative Mythology.

[2] See J. M. Robertson's *A Short History of Christianity*, p. 43. As a matter of fact, Mithraism spread just as much, or more, until Christianity obtained the necessary political power to suppress it.

some of my readers of the experiences of the early Christians, and of the witness to the truth of Christianity furnished by the "noble army of martyrs"; and they may say: "Admitting that there be nothing extraordinary in the mere fact of Christianity's spread, you must allow that its power over men's minds is little, if at all, short of miraculous. Men could not have given their lives for a falsehood." This argument will not bear the slightest scrutiny. Supposing the noble army were an historical fact, the argument based upon it would be adequately met by pointing to the last Ghazi who ran amok in the hope of a speedy delivery from a dirty and ugly spouse on earth, and of reaping the reward of a clean and lovely houri in heaven. But the noble army is not altogether an historical fact. The truth is that martyr-making became an ecclesiastical industry. The historian Gibbon estimates that at most about two thousand Christians fell in the Diocletian persecution—which was the only general persecution—and this estimate is now commonly accepted. "Since," says Gibbon, "it cannot be doubted that the Christians were more numerous, and their enemies more exasperated, in the time of Diocletian than they had ever been in any former persecution, this probable and moderate computation may teach us to estimate the number of primitive saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the important purpose of introducing Christianity into the world."[1] Compare these figures with the numbers who have suffered death for their religion in quite recent times. There were thousands upon thousands of native Christians cruelly murdered in the late Boxer risings.

[1] Gibbon's *Rome*, vol. ii., p. 257 (ed. 1809).

We hear very little about this noble army. A yellow[1] martyr hardly counts, I suppose? Again, take martyrs of a non-Christian faith. The Bab Abbas Effendi suffered martyrdom for his zeal in 1850, and between that date and now the most conservative opinion on the Babi martyrdoms puts them at ten thousand. In what way are martyrs[2] any special witness for the truth of the Christian Faith? "Steadfastness under persecution says much for the sincerity, and still more for the tenacity, of the believer, but very little for the objective truth of that which he believes."[3]

§ 6. *The Universality of the Religious Instinct.*

THE HYPOTHESIS STATED.

The fact that a large proportion of the human race, including some of the greatest[4] in thought and action, continue, or appear to continue, to believe in God and

[1] In less recent times, in 1638, forty thousand yellow Christians were put to death in the great Castle of Hara, the *Dutch traders at Nagasaki supplying cannon and gunpowder to be used against their fellow-Christians.* (Mentioned in *The Christian Faith in Japan*, p. 19, a book published by the S.P.G.) The heroic Japanese Christians eagerly sought the crown of martyrdom, and do, indeed, help to swell the noble army; but the event occurred between fifteen and sixteen hundred years after the martyrdoms that we have been taught to connect with the truth of Christianity. In 1862 the canonisation of 620 missionaries, who had met with martyrdom in Japan some two centuries and a half before, was made the occasion of an imposing ceremonial by Pope Pius IX. Were not the greater number of the 40,000 unfortunate Japanese equally deserving of this honour?

[2] To realise thoroughly that martyrs are not a Christian monopoly the reader cannot do better than read Winwood Reade's *The Martyrdom of Man*, a book as charming as it is informing.

[3] Huxley's *Essays on Controverted Questions*, p. 9, Prologue.

[4] Are we not liable to forget that the most brilliant geniuses may make mistakes sometimes, either from want of knowledge of facts, or from a psychological unwillingness to accept them, due to a trust in emotion rather than in reason? May not the very subtlety of their intellects aid the work of their own self-deception?

immortality is considered by many to furnish the best proof for the truth of the belief. The Church naturally encourages this opinion, and proceeds to strengthen it further by asserting that religious instinct is, and always has been, universal. This assertion must now be examined, and, to avoid any misconceptions, it will be advisable in the first place to have some specimens of it before us.

Canon Liddon informs us that "man is ever feeling after God," and that "the thought of God is always latent in the mind of man." "Cicero's statement that there is no nation so barbarous and wild as not to have believed in some *divinity* [italics are mine] is still, notwithstanding certain apparent exceptions, true. A nation of pure Atheists is yet to be discovered."[1] Dr. Flint devotes the seventh of his Lectures on Anti-Theistic theories to the discussion of the question, "Are there tribes of Atheists?" and he comes to the conclusion that "an impartial examination of the relevant facts shows that religion is virtually universal."[2] The Bishop of London is of opinion that "man is a praying animal. He always has prayed throughout his history. It is a human instinct. This instinct of prayer pointed to the existence of God."[3] Dr. Warschauer affirms that the spiritual faculty — a consciousness of "the existence of spiritual realities, of a world beyond the senses"—"constitutes a universal human endowment."[4]

[1] Liddon's *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 48.
[2] Flint's *Anti-Theistic Theories*.
[3] See address to the Royal Naval Volunteers by their hon. chaplain, the Bishop of London, reported in the *Church Times* for June 23rd, 1905.
[4] *Anti-Nunquam*, p. 80.

THE RATIONALIST'S CONTENTION.

The Rationalist asks: What grounds have we for assuming that the existence of religious belief points to the existence of a religious instinct? Is not a man's religion determined by the geographical accident of his birth? Has not his religion to be diligently instilled into him from the cradle? How, then, can it be said that man is *by nature* religious? How can it be said that the craving for a deity is instinctive? To this the Christian apologist may reply that, however much the precise form of the religious belief may be due to education, no belief of any kind could be engendered without a predisposition to accept it. Have we not seen,[1] however, that primitive beliefs were the natural offspring of fear and wonder? Inability to account for phenomena, ignorance of the laws of nature, and those abnormal psychical experiences concerning which science has but now commenced to furnish natural explanations, all combined to turn primitive men into staunch supernaturalists. For the same reasons, children in years as well as children in knowledge have always been predisposed to belief in the supernatural. This predisposition (it can hardly be called an instinct) may be universal, but it does not lead necessarily to belief in a deity. For that there must be education. If it be an instinct, it is not a religious instinct, although the soil it produces is eminently suitable for the sowing of supernatural dogmas and for the triumph of priestcraft.

Even if the question of the origin of religious beliefs be waived, and if the process by which ancestral beliefs have been assimilated be left out of consideration—

[1] In Chap. IV.

in other words, if both the ethnologist's theories of the evolution of the idea of God and the educational factor be disregarded—the Church's assertion is still open to dispute; for the Rationalist contends that religious belief is not universal. Is his contention supported by acknowledged facts? This we must now inquire into.

THE APOLOGIST'S VIEWS CONCERNING SUPERSTITION AND THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT.

At the outset of the inquiry we at once experience a difficulty. It is not at all clear what the apologist includes under the category of religious beliefs. If it be taken as an axiom that the grossest superstition, the mere belief in the supernatural, is the germ of a religious belief, and therefore that all ignorant or superstitious persons have the religious instinct, then the proposition will be true for practically the whole of mankind in the remote past, and for a very large proportion in the present. Whether it be primeval man who frequently believed only in magic, usually in devils, and rarely in divinities, or whether it be the twentieth-century lady of fashion who wears a white elephant amulet to bring her luck at "Bridge," both are imbued with the religious instinct. The absurdity of the supposition is fully apparent if we only carry it far enough.

It is by no means easy to understand where the apologist draws the line. He may not say so, but his contention really does seem to point to the absurdity that almost any crude superstition springs from a divine spark. The neo-apologist, however, will do well to reflect that the establishment of any connection between superstition and religion only plays into

the hands of the Rationalist, who maintains that there is certainly the closest connection between the two. I am compelled to enter into these details, for, among the facts which I am about to bring forward in contradiction of the assertion of universality, some relate to instances of superstitions which might be construed into signs of the religious instinct. If the apologist does not go quite so far as this, my task will be rendered much easier. Perhaps, as Dr. Flint is recognised as one of the most eminent of the Christian apologists, the conclusions he comes to will represent the unspoken opinion of others. He says that, "if savage tribes have some sort of superstitious belief, it would only be in accord with modern theories regarding the evolution of the idea of God.....The presence of false religion is as good evidence of the existence of religion as the presence of true religion.....Perhaps, if we say that religion is man's belief in a being or beings mightier than himself and inaccessible to his senses, but not indifferent to his sentiment and actions, with the feelings and practices which flow from such belief, we have a definition of the kind required, one excluding nothing which can be called religion, and including nothing which is only partially present in religion."[1] This definition would not, one may presume, include mere belief in magic, but might be taken to include a man's belief in devils. As there are many who would not agree that devil-worship and the like can have any connection with god-worship, I shall follow the

[1] See *Anti-Theistic Theories*, Lecture vii., "Are there Tribes of Atheists?" What were these early gods or devils? Did they not simply demand fear, and did not reverence and worship spring at first from this source, and this source only? As intellectual conceptions changed, so did the ideas of God. Men make their gods after their own likeness; in their own image make they them.

ethnologist in citing examples of the absence of god-worship as evidence of the absence of the religious instinct; but I shall also give examples in which there is no appearance of worship either of God or Devil.

BELIEFS OF SAVAGE MAN.

Among the concluding remarks of Darwin's *Descent of Man* we read: "The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete, of all the distinctions between man and the lower animals. It is, however, impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand, a belief in all-pervading spiritual agencies seems to be universal,[1] and apparently follows from a considerable advance in the reasoning powers of man, and from a still greater advance in his faculties of imagination, curiosity, and wonder. I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for His existence; but this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, possessing only a little more power than man; for the belief in them is far more general than the belief in a beneficent Deity."[2]

[1] "In its simplest condition, such as may be met with among the Australian savages, theology is a mere belief in the existence, powers, and disposition (usually malignant) of ghost-like entities who may be propitiated or scared away; but no cult can properly be said to exist. *And in this stage theology is wholly independent of ethics*" (Huxley on "The Evolution of Theology," pp. 184–5 of *Controverted Questions*).

[2] *The Descent of Man*, pp. 394–5. It is now generally recognised by ethnologists that in the evolution of society magic precedes religion. Andrew Lang, in the third chapter of his book, *Magic and Religion*, instances Australian tribes, and says: "Nobody dreams of propitiating gods or spirits by prayer [compare Bishop Ingram's statement that man is a PRAYING machine!], while magic is universally practised." Here, then, even if we adopt Dr. Flint's broad definition, we surely

Sir John Lubbock, now Lord Avebury, states the argument against the universality of religion in his *Prehistoric Times*. He asks: "How can a people who are unable to count their own fingers possibly raise their minds so far as to admit even the rudiments of religion?" And he sums up his observations on various tribes by saying: "Indeed, the first idea of God is almost always an evil spirit."[1]

RELIGION IN MODERN CHINA.

So far we see that the opponents of the "Universal" theory presume in their argument that devil-worship has no relation to true god-worship, and we may note that it never even entered the heads of such men as Darwin and Lubbock that their argument would subsequently be met by the contention of some of their opponents that they are essentially identical. Nor is this peculiar opinion held by clerics who have studied devil-worship on the spot. Thus the Rev. Arthur H. Smith, D.D., twenty-two years a missionary in China, describes[2] the fear of goblins and devils which figures so largely in Taoism; but, far from suggesting the presence of the religious instinct, he laments its total absence. Among his many pertinent observations I commend the following to the serious consideration of those who believe in an universal religious instinct: "*If the Chinese ever did recognise the true God, that knowledge has certainly been most effectually lost*, like an inscription on an ancient coin now

have examples of the absence of the religious instinct. There is, as Mr. Lang remarks, "no room for a God, nor for an idea of a future life, except the life of successive re-incarnations."

[1] Quoted by Dr. Flint in the lecture above referred to.

[2] In his most interesting and standard work, *Chinese Characteristics*, ch. xxvi.

covered with the accumulated rust of millenniums.[1]..... Sir Thomas Wade, whose long familiarity with China and the Chinese might be supposed to entitle him to speak with authority on so plain a question as whether the Chinese have or have not a religion, has recently published his opinion as follows: 'If religion is held to mean more than mere ethics, I deny that the Chinese have a religion.'"[2]

Speaking of Chinese nature-worship, Dr. Smith says: "*No prayer is uttered*.....What is it that at such times the people worship? Sometimes they affirm that the object of worship is heaven and earth. Sometimes they say that it is heaven, and again they call it 'the old man of the sky.' The latter term often leads to an impression that the Chinese do have a real perception of a personal Deity. But when it is ascertained that this supposed person is frequently matched by another called 'grandmother earth,' the value of the inference is open to serious question."[3]

As to there being no such thing as an atheistic people, are we to take no account of the cultured classes? Mark the following: "The polytheism and pantheism of the lower classes of Chinese are matched in the upper classes by what appears to be *pure atheism*.....*There never was on this earth a body of educated and cultured men so thoroughly agnostic and atheistic as the mass of Confucian scholars*.[4].....Its absolute indifference to the profoundest spiritual truths in the nature of man is the most melancholy characteristic of the Chinese mind—its ready acceptance of a body without a soul, of a soul without a

[1] *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 289. "All the gods of China may be said to have been dead men" (p. 293).
[2] *Ibid*, p. 306. [3] *Ibid*, p. 291. [4] *Ibid*, pp. 292–3.

spirit, of a spirit without life, of a cosmos without a cause, *a universe without a God.*"[1]

Alluding to the mixture of Confucianism with Taoism and Buddhism, he remarks: "Any kind of a divinity which seems adapted to exert a favourable influence in any given direction will be patronised, just as a man who happens to need a new umbrella goes to some shop where they keep such goods for sale. To inquire into the antecedents of the divinity who is thus worshipped no more occurs to a Chinese than it would occur to an Englishman who wanted the umbrella to satisfy himself as to the origin of umbrellas, and when they first came into general use.....The Chinaman has carried 'intellectual hospitality' to the point of logical suicide, but he does not know it, and cannot be made to understand it when he is told."[2]

Three questions suggest themselves. If the pious lady who contributes towards mission work in China only knew of this, would she be pleased?[3] Are there not many English people strangely like the Chinese in an umbrella-patronage of Christianity? Finally, does not the modern apologist (with his theory of Progressive Revelation and his idea that Christianity has yet to learn much and will be improved by contact with the faiths of the East) carry "intellectual hospitality" to the point of logical suicide?

[1] *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 313.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 294 and 295.

[3] Also if she heard of General Chaffee's remarks to an American Methodist audience in New York not long ago. While praising the work of the missionaries, he told his audience that he met many of the most prominent Chinamen while at Pekin, and he was obliged to say that he did not meet *a single intelligent Chinaman* who expressed a desire to embrace the Christian religion. (Reported in the Hong Kong *Daily Press* of May 9th, 1903.)

The advice of Confucius was to reverence the gods as if they existed,[1] but in any case to keep them at a distance, and have as little to do with them as possible; and his advice has been followed. Dr. Smith tells us: "The popular instinct has taken at its true value the uncertainty conveyed in the words 'as if,' and has embodied them in current sayings which accurately express the state of mind of the mass of the people:—

> Worship the gods as if they came;
> But, if you don't, it's all the same.
> Worship the gods as if the gods were there;
> But, if you worship not, the gods don't care."[2]

The absence of the instinct of reverence may be judged by the following episode related by Dr. Smith: "A District Magistrate tried a case which involved a priest, and, by implication, the Buddha which was the occupant of the temple. This *god* was summoned to appear before the magistrate and told to kneel, which he failed to do, whereupon the magistrate ordered him to be given five hundred blows, by which time the god was reduced to a heap of dust, and judgment was pronounced against him by default."[3] (Of their manner of treating *devils* I had, not long ago, a personal experience. Standing on the quay at Shanghai, I was deafened by the bang, bang, bang of ear-splitting bombs exploded by a crowd of Chinamen. However crude their method, their intentions were excellent. They wished to scare away the devils who might have elected to accompany their friends on the voyage to England.)

[1] The classical quotation commonly seen over the door of a temple is: "Worship the gods as if they were present."
[2] *Chinese Characteristics*, pp. 299–300.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 305.

Finally, as a commentary on the oft-repeated assertion that the great difference between the sacred books of the East and of the Bible is the low plane of morality in the former, the following words quoted by Dr. Smith are of considerable interest: "No people," says Mr. Meadows, "whether of ancient or modern times, has possessed a sacred literature so completely exempt as the Chinese from licentious descriptions, and from every offensive expression. There is not a single sentence in the whole of the Sacred Books and their annotations that may not be read aloud in any family circle in England."[1] Can this be said of our Bible?

APOSTATES IN CHRISTENDOM.

If I have given[2] the religious attitude of the modern Chinese the largest share of attention, it must be remembered that they far outnumber any other nation in the world. Also I think the fallacies regarding the religious instinct will perhaps stand out more clearly if we consider the present twentieth century, instead of millenniums B.C. I have said nothing of the apostates in Christendom, the Huxleys and Spencers, who declare that they are without the religious instinct. I must consider them ruled out of court, for are we not told[3] that "there are men with faculties of insight amounting to genius in other regions of mental activity who have never developed the spiritual

[1] *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 288.

[2] Another instance I might have given is that of the modern Australian aborigines, concerning whom Professor Baldwin Spencer wrote in 1903 to the author of the *Golden Bough*: "I do not think that there is really any direct evidence of any Australian native belief in a 'supreme being' in our sense of the term." (See the *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1905, p. 171.)

[3] See p. 78 of *Anti-Nunquam*.

faculty, and are thus debarred the privileges of spiritual geniuses—geniuses in the region in which man holds communion with God"?

RELIGION IN MODERN JAPAN.

But, at the risk of increasing the citation of examples *ad nauseam*, I cannot omit a passing reference to the Japanese. I shall reserve for the last chapter my remarks on the phenomenon of their non-theological moral training, and confine myself to the present condition of their faith as given by a clergyman, the Rev. Herbert Moore,[1] who was for some years a missionary in Japan. Mr. Moore tells us: "We are all Shintoists to a certain extent, for Shinto is the non-Christian version of the Communion of Saints. And we recognise the truth that Buddhism contains when we read Ecclesiastes in church.....But these old faiths are fast perishing from the hearts of the Japanese, leaving behind them blank godlessness, indifference, and materialism.[2].....Out of 942 students in Tokyo who recently gave an account of their religious position, 555 declared themselves unbelievers in any religion, 68 were Christians, 18 Shintoists,[3] most of the remaining 319, Buddhists."

Mr. Moore, in chapter xiv. of his book, quotes a summary of the situation by the *Japan Times*, which all who are interested in the question whether Japan is likely to adopt Christianity would do well to read. As bearing on the particular point we are now discussing, the following may be noted: "We cannot believe that it [Christianity] will ever succeed in

[1] And appearing in a book published lately by the S. P. G.
[2] *The Christian Faith in Japan*, pp. 42, 43.
[3] There are very few real Shintoists among the better educated.

getting a firm hold upon the minds of the educated classes. Men of these classes have for centuries lived and died under a system of morality which inculcates virtue for virtue's sake, and entirely dispenses with supernatural sanctions of any sort.....We cannot agree with those who, like Mr. Toyama and Mr. Fukuzawa, recommend it to their countrymen, while they themselves refuse to believe in it, except as a collection of useful superstitions."[1] How many Toyamas and Fukuzawas are there not in modern Christendom?

Speaking of Buddhism, the *Japan Times* remarks: "It has only been able to obtain a footing here by adapting itself to and humouring the original beliefs of the people."[2] And, speaking of Shintoism: "As to Shinto, we may dismiss it altogether out of our consideration. It can hardly be called a religion, and as a system of morality it is hopelessly encumbered with a mass of legendary lore which will hardly bear the light of scientific criticism."

CLASSICAL HISTORY.

It matters not where you direct your searchlight, you cannot fail to discover instance upon instance confuting the pious assertion of an universal religious instinct. Take the case of the great Roman poet and philosopher, Lucretius, whose unique poem, *De Rerum Natura*, has acquired a new interest in the present day. He set before himself the task of finally crushing that fear of the gods, and that fear of death resulting from it, which he regarded as the source of

[1] *The Christian Faith in Japan*, pp. 128–9.

[2] Compare the Rationalist's reasons for the spread of Christianity, pp. 177–82 and 302 of this book.

all human ills. He denied the two bases of all religion (as we understand it)—the doctrines of a supernatural Governor of the world, and of a future life.

I will not continue to multiply examples. It is surely clear. The religious instinct is *not* universal.

THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT IN WOMAN.

In an inquiry, however cursory, into the religious instinct, its special development in woman must claim, at least, a moment's attention. In a book I have already had occasion to refer to, *The Religion of Woman*, there is an instructive chapter on the religious instinct in woman. The psychology of woman's special religious sense is there discussed, and, as already mentioned, the explanation is offered that "she is more imaginative, more emotional, and more sensitive to suggestion (using the word in its strict psychological meaning) than man, while her education is still totally different from his." However this may be, it is the truism that her religious sense *is* more fully developed than man's that I wish here to emphasise. The woman is thus *naturally* an angel, the man ——. Formerly, as we have seen, woman was looked down upon as the source of man's downfall. Now we find her to be endowed with so excellent a gift from God that she is able to be in closer communion with Him, and to have thus, apparently, a brighter prospect of reaching heaven! How can these things be?

NOTE ON HUMAN SENTIMENT AS TO A FUTURE LIFE.

What is the Rationalistic explanation of that essence of the religious instinct, belief in an after life? It may, I think, be summed up briefly in some such words as these: "The conception of non-existence is an effort beyond the power of human intellect. As long as man thinks, his ego is fully conscious of his existence, and not able to grasp the idea of non-existence. Thus religion is a functional weakness." The instinct of self-preservation does the rest; it transforms the speculation into an ardent desire. "The theory of a continued existence after death is nothing more than a certain manifestation of the impulse for self-preservation, as the instinct for self-preservation itself is nothing more than the form under which our vital energies, that have their seat in every cell of our organism, manifest themselves to our consciousness."[1] Is not this a perfectly natural explanation of the craving for immortality?

This craving, as we have seen, is not universal; while, in Buddhism, it is assumed that man ought to strive for extinction. Even among Western nations the craving is not so common as it is generally supposed to be, and as the Church confidently takes for granted. In support of this conclusion, I should mention that my readers will find a startling confirmation in an article on "Human Sentiment as to a Future Life," which appears in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* for October, 1904. The article is written by a well-known psychologist, Mr. F. C. S. Schiller, Fellow and tutor of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and author of various well-known works on the mind (*Riddles of the Sphinx*, 1891; *Humanism*, 1903, etc.). He reviews the results of a laborious inquiry by the American branch of the S. P. R., and comes to the conclusion that "the returns show a hitherto hardly suspected *weakness* of the desire for knowledge of a future life,"[2] and

[1] See chapter ii. of *Conventional Lies of our Civilisation*, by Max Nordau.

[2] P. 439 of the *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*

that, "amid all the various phenomena of human psychology, distress due to uncertainty about one's fate after death seems to be one of the *rarest*."[1] Mr. Schiller, the apostle of Professor W. James in this country, shows that he himself possesses the craving for an after life in no ordinary degree, and this adds all the more force to his statement that the instinct is in nowise universal. I, too, once had a craving so intense that hell itself seemed less awful than total annihilation. To those who have built up high hopes their destruction must come as a terrible shock—a shock eventually relieved by a feeling of resignation to the inevitable.

What we, as anxious parents, have to ask ourselves is: Do we not agree with St. Paul when he says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"; and are we not aware that, with the advance of knowledge, the present widespread disbelief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ will become more and more general? Even now how many disbelieve or preserve an agnosticism regarding the chief dogmas of the Christian creed? How many are sceptical concerning the continuance of consciousness after death? Does either science or common sense support a belief in the survival of personality? Are we right, then, in permitting our children's minds to be imbued with a "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life"? Is it a kind act to expose our children to the pain of a rude awakening by instilling hopes that are destined to be ultimately shattered? Is it a wise act to allow their morality to be based upon foundations that are doomed to destruction? It is not as if we were forced into telling fairy stories because we shrink from negative teaching. It is not as if there were no natural incentives to right conduct, no positive teaching possible, without an admixture of theological speculations. Non-theological moral instruction is not only possible, but will be extremely beneficial and is urgently wanted. This will appear more fully in the following chapter.

[1] P. 441 of the *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*

CONCLUSION

Chapter VIII.

CONCLUSION

§ 1. *A Summary.*

The hostile evidence appears to be overwhelming. Christianity cannot be true. Provided that we see things as they really are, and not as we wish them to be, we cannot but come to this conclusion. Let me recall to the reader's mind the more salient points.

Chapter I.: The Situation.—All over Christendom a great conflict has commenced between naturalists and supernaturalists. The real attitude of the laity, and especially of the cultured portion of it, is far more sceptical than the clergy imagine, or, at any rate, are prepared to admit. They do not realise that Agnostics and semi-believers have joined in a conspiracy of silence, either on account of their conviction of the need for Christianity as a restraint during the prevalence of ignorance, or on account of their regard for public and private opinion and vested interests, or last, but not least, on account of sheer indifference. To put it frankly, the Churches have for their chief ally nowadays the trinity of ignorance, insincerity, and indifference.[1] Not only is this alliance one which

[1] The Churches complacently attribute this indifference either to carelessness, or else to a desire to lead an immoral life. They never made a greater mistake. The chief cause is conscious or unconscious scepticism as to the truth of the Christian dogmas.

they ought to be the first to repudiate, but it cannot be depended upon in the near future. Though a mind be built, as it were, in water-tight compartments, a flood of truth that is deep enough will burst them open.

Christianity and science are *not* reconciled. The character of the present wave of scepticism differs from that of all others in the history of Christianity or of mankind, in that it has the support of modern knowledge. It has all the appearance of a wave that will increase in strength, and finally destroy all the present faiths of the world. The Christian apologies are unsatisfactory to the last degree. Often they are based on premises the truth of which is open to the gravest doubt, or they betray ignorance of established facts. They are also conflicting, so that the arguments of the advanced and the arguments of the conservative are mutually destructive, the latter frequently bearing out the contentions of the rationalist regarding the former. For these reasons they are totally unconvincing. Meanwhile the main issue of the conflict is confused and delayed by various side issues, which have nothing really to do with the question of Christianity's truth. There is further delay through the currency of a number of popular fallacies.

Chapter II.: Miracles.—Belief in miracles is necessary if Christianity be true. The various attempts to explain miracles are evasions, not solutions of a difficulty, and are as specious as they are conflicting. Nor can ninety-nine persons out of a hundred bring themselves to agree with Canon Mason that miracles are no longer needed because "the Holy Spirit, with His eternal freshness of life, does not cramp Himself

by obsolete and antiquated methods of action."[1] The fundamental miracles are not historical facts. The evidence for all miracles is totally inadequate. No miracle has ever occurred.

CHAPTER III.: MODERN BIBLE CRITICISM.—All non-Christian and some Christian theologians accept the conclusions of the Higher Criticism in their entirety, while many learned divines accept much that is destructive of beliefs that have been held for nearly two millenniums. The critics show that the Bible is not historically true, and explain that "we must turn from external details to the great spiritual truths which underlie them."[2] As observed by the Dean of Canterbury,[3] "they only *say* that they are not historical; what they *mean* is that they are not true." The strictly orthodox and the rationalist are at one in agreeing that historic truth is essential to Christianity; that Christianity claims to be built not on ideas, but on facts; and that the far-fetched explanations of the advanced school cannot be accepted. The rationalist, however, finds himself forced to admit the validity of the destructive criticisms, and also finds further grounds for unbelief in the silence of historians, in the manner in which the alleged revelation was transmitted, and in those sober facts which so completely impugn the divinity of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV.: COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY. — The similarity of beliefs, customs, and teachings in ancient

[1] See p. 477 of *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism*, by A. J. Mason, D.D. (Longmans.)

[2] See p. 621 of the *Church Times*, November 17th, 1905, which contains a trenchant review of *The Higher Criticism* (see note 1, p. 89).

[3] At a men's service held in St. Mary Bredin's Church, Canterbury, on December 4th, 1904.

religions with those in the Christian religion are as numerous as they are remarkable. These parallels deprive Christianity of any claim to originality, and furnish an explanation of its origin which completely destroys our belief in its truth. The theory of a progressive revelation is the outcome of dire necessity, for the survival of Christianity depends upon its acceptance. This theory is for many and cogent reasons quite untenable. It is not, and cannot be, accepted by the strictly orthodox. The latter endeavour, therefore, to disprove the closeness of the parallels, or, failing this, to prove that they are Christian accretions. Enlightened divines, on the other hand, acknowledge the parallels, and rely upon the theory of progressive revelation to explain them.

Chapter V.: Evolution.—For the benefit of those who may be ill-informed on the subject, the theory of evolution is explained, and convincing proofs of our animal origin are submitted. The theory is generally accepted by the cultured, though much ignorance and prejudice concerning it still prevail. The evolutionary processes are completely at variance with the Bible and with our ideas of God. The Churches as a body do not accept evolution willingly, and are chary in acknowledging its truth in their public utterances. Many of their most distinguished members are, however, evolutionists, and these profess that evolution is helpful to belief. Their arguments are singularly unconvincing. The doctrine of the Fall is untenable.

Chapter VI.: Theistic Proofs.—Many, honestly deeming themselves to be Christians, are in reality either Deists or non-Christian Theists. The recognised arguments for Theism are the evidences of a First Cause, of design and directivity, and of

benevolence. Not one of these is accepted by more than a very small minority of scientific men. The evidence of design and directivity is more apparent than real, while, with regard to benevolence, it would be easier to demonstrate the very reverse. The evidence from religious experience is another argument, which has recently been submitted to the cultured, as a final proof of the existence of the spiritual world. This argument is shown not only to be full of absurdities, but indirectly to furnish natural explanations for much that has hitherto puzzled mankind, and led to belief in the supernatural.

CHAPTER VII.: POPULAR ARGUMENTS.—Finally, there are certain popular arguments which help to confirm the believer, and to determine the friendly attitude of the average unbeliever. Broadly speaking, they are all comprised under two main assertions—Christianity's power for good, and the universality of the religious instinct. So long as we confine ourselves to a shallow and biassed examination, the flaws in these assumptions will pass unnoticed; but when we submit them to a closer examination, with open minds, we find that they cannot be substantiated by the facts of either ancient or modern history.

I may be permitted to add that I attach the greatest importance to the object-lesson now presented to us by Russia and Japan. Not only have we here an excellent illustration of the fallacies concerning the power of Christianity and the connection between conduct and belief, but this illustration has been given to the *whole* world. Among the millions who have watched events, thousands upon thousands must have some inkling of the place that religion holds in the minds of these two peoples, and, therefore, must

have found much that will cause them to modify their opinions concerning these popular arguments. I cannot imagine any other conjunction of circumstances which could have resulted in such a broadcast sowing of the seeds of scepticism.[1]

THE MAIN CONCLUSION.—It is customary in Christian apologetics to palliate the inadequacy of any one particular argument, or set of arguments, for belief by reminding us that we must take into consideration the combined weight of all the other (equally inadequate) arguments. The apologist of unbelief has no need to ask this of his readers. On the contrary, he is able to point out a number of arguments, each of which is, of itself, fully sufficient to warrant their joining the ranks of the unbelievers. For instance, he can point to any one of the following as fairly conclusive evidence :—The dismal failure[2] of Christianity after nearly two thousand years' trial; the apparent impossibility of and complete want of evidence for the miracles on which Christianity is founded; the destructive criticism of the Bible, which cannot be gainsaid; the intensely grave suspicions thrown upon the originality of Christianity by the revelations of comparative mythology; the various dilemmas arising from the accepted doctrine of evolution; the inadequacy and conflicting character of the so-called

[1] The Church is becoming alive to this new danger. The articles of "Viator," in the *Church Times* of July 8th and 15th, 1904, betray an antipathy to the Japanese founded on this anxiety. "Nothing but unmitigated disaster," writes the Rev. T. A. Lacey, "will prepare the Japanese for the Gospel." It is comforting to feel that his friendly and Christian hopes regarding our allies are not likely to be realised.

[2] One phase of this failure was well shown by "Oxoniensis," in his letters which started and ended the "Do We Believe?" correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*. On the other hand, we find pronounced unbelievers taking a leading part in wise reforms, and devoting their lives to researches that will benefit humanity.

Theistic proofs; and, finally, the fallacies in arguments hitherto so popular and faith-producing. We cannot get away from facts. Modern knowledge forces us to admit that the Christian Faith cannot be true.

Having arrived at this main conclusion, the unbeliever is at once confronted with many burning questions. I shall endeavour to outline the answers to those that seem the more pressing; but the subject is a large one, and cannot be adequately treated in a few short paragraphs. The main difficulty is, of course, the morality problem, and, if that admits of a favourable solution, we shall be in a better position to consider the next question: Should the unbeliever keep his unbelief to himself, or should he speak out?

§ 2. *Why Lead a Moral Life?*

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Let me say at once that if, after the elimination of all untruths from Christianity, we could build a belief in God and immortality on the residue, we should then have a far more powerful incentive to right conduct than anything that I am about to urge. I fully admit that to tell the ordinary mortal *brought up in the Christian faith* to do right for right's sake will often be futile, inspiring though the sentiment may be for some few of us. I admit also the fact that morality always tends to the well-being of the individual and the race. It is the one and only sound argument for the working of any ethical purpose in nature, and, if we can feel that in leading the moral life we are helping to carry out some high purpose in which we are personally concerned, such a belief will certainly be of great ethical

value. In the following argument, however, I hope to show that, even without a religious incentive, we have all-sufficient reasons for leading the moral life. At present our morality is bound up with a belief which is false, and which people are beginning to feel and know to be false. Therefore it is more than ever necessary that we should learn more of those reasons for morality which do not depend upon this or that belief.

THE NECESSITY FOR MORALITY.

The man who does not realise that any such cogent reasons exist will argue: "I quite understand that the welfare of society depends upon the moral conduct of its members; but why should I care for the good of society? There are many immoral things which I can do without being found out—without any harm coming to me, directly or indirectly. Neither do I believe in the familiar adage, 'Follow nature, and you cannot go wrong.' Civilisation is continually wrestling with nature; we go against nature a thousand times a day. Why should I not follow nature just so far as I can get out of my nerves a maximum of pleasure at the expense of a minimum of pain? Tell me, then, you who do not believe in hell or heaven, you who think we can live under a system of morality which entirely dispenses with supernatural sanctions, why should I lead a moral life?"

To this question I would reply by another: "Have you no self-respect, the commonest and most universal incentive to right conduct, and one which necessarily includes respect for others? Even if your body had health, would your mind have peace without morality?" The essence of happiness is a contented mind. Bodily

ailments and other misfortunes, not of your own making, may often mar your efforts to obtain this desirable frame of mind; but the nearest approach to it that is possible will be gained by leading the moral life. Righteousness contributes usually to success and invariably to happiness, because it is in harmony with the needs and laws of health and social life. Note, please, that I say "contributes." We are not speaking now of circumstances beyond man's control—the calamities and catastrophes, daily and hourly occurring, in accordance with nature's inexorable laws, which would not be affected either way by man's conduct. Also, as there are conditions under which the body may not be affected by immorality discreetly pursued, it will be better to confine our attention to that which *is* always affected—the mind. This will be recognised more clearly when we grasp the fact that the true origin of the guide to conduct lies in the instincts inherited from our animal ancestors.[1]

Man is a sociable animal, and in his relations with his fellow-men his moral instinct is largely a development of the social instinct. To secure the happiness of the individual as well as of the community, this instinct demands satisfaction. Nothing depresses the mind of man or beast more than an unsatisfied or outraged instinct. If an instinct cannot be satisfied, or can be satisfied only by outraging another, it is an

[1] This statement is made on the authority of Darwin and of all our modern naturalists. The theory is established, and its important message to the human race elaborated, in such works as Darwin's *Descent of Man* (see vol. i., chap. v., "The Development of the Intellect and Moral Faculties"), Huxley's *Ethical Lectures* ("Science and Morals," 1886; "Evolution and Ethics," the Romanes' lecture for 1893, etc.), Clodd's *Story of Creation* (chap. xi., on "Social Evolution"), Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, and Prince Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*.

instance of one of the many disharmonies in nature. In the case of the social instinct, its satisfaction is a supreme necessity, and to attain this satisfaction, and thereby ensure contentment of mind, there is only one course open—the moral life. Should the individual choose the immoral life, and should he even succeed in following it without suffering social ostracism, he will certainly injure not only the happiness of the community, but also his own chances of such real and permanent happiness as this world might otherwise have afforded him.

USELESSNESS OF VAGUE THREATS.

But, it may be objected, the average man will not be deterred from wrong-doing by the fear of vague consequences; he is only concerned to snatch the immediate pleasure (or what seems to him to be a pleasure), to satisfy a momentary lust, to secure the gratification of his senses on the "bird-in-the-hand" principle. This is all very true, of course, and incidentally it accounts for the failure of Christianity or any other belief that relies for its ethical effect on a system of vague threats and promises. But once get rid of the nebulosity, and all is changed—so long, that is, as the brain is healthy, and the supremacy of reason acknowledged. Emotions of hate, cupidity, sensuality, and the like, are always liable, as are all other emotions, to cloud the reason—to derange the brain temporarily; how much more so when there is no clear perception of disagreeable consequences? No man in his senses will act with entire disregard of consequences; it is only when they are not sufficiently clear that they are disregarded. It is absurd to suppose that the ordinary man is such an unthinking

animal that he never studies ultimate consequences. The most selfish men and women—and the religious world is not without its fair share of them—think of the morrow. No one more so. It is the exceptional individual of the happy-go-lucky sort, with no enemy but himself, on whom it is difficult to impress the need of thinking ahead.

THE NEED FOR AN *EARLY* EDUCATION IN ETHICAL PRINCIPLES.

My contention, then, is that a feeling of *certainty* regarding ultimate consequences is, above all others, the most powerful factor in influencing conduct. This certainty will be attained through, and only through, the medium of education. Knowing this, it is the duty of parents and teachers to be continually implanting in the minds of the young the objects of right-doing and the consequences of wrong-doing, wholly apart from questions of belief, not only because such teaching enshrines a great truth, but because this truth is liable to be lost sight of in the mists of theological dogmas and metaphysical theories. Children, it is true, adopt moral principles out of regard for social and parental authority, and not as the result of reasoned conviction, so that at first the scientific reasons for right conduct will doubtless be to some extent unappreciated. But, meanwhile, a habit of mind will be forming, and, as the new teaching will appeal to the common sense of the growing mind, and not to its credulity, a reasoned conviction will shortly follow. Conduct instilled in this manner, free from theological speculations, is based on a firm foundation, which no later experiences in life will be able to upset. It is not nebulous. It is not susceptible of change

through an alteration in religious views. It is true. The future generation, so brought up, will regard the consequences of immorality with complete certitude, and will do so without having to extricate themselves, like the present generation, from objectionable habits of thought and conduct engendered by false teaching.

THE OBJECT-LESSON FURNISHED BY THE JAPANESE.

This is no abstract theory. We have a concrete and magnificent example before us in a nation whose character is formed entirely by non-theological instruction. I refer, of course, to the Japanese. There are no people more refined, courteous, gentle, amiable, and innately æsthetic than these Latins of the Orient; no people more brave, hardy, and self-controlled; none more cleanly and healthy in body and happy in mind. The Japanese army, by its perfection of transport, commissariat, and equipment, its surgical and sanitary work, its discipline and dash, its passionate patriotism and its humanity to the conquered, surpasses the armies of the Christian nations who send their missionaries to Japan. With regard to sexual morality, "it must be remembered," as Professor Inazo Nitobe remarks, "that, whatever charges may be made against the Japanese people, the same charge can be, and is, actually made against every country, England not excluded, by travellers, since it is usually the worst, the lax, side of life to which a foreigner is first introduced."[1] Personally, I should say that the charge could be met by pointing to the acknowledged virtues and physical condition

[1] P. 264 of *Japan by the Japanese*, edited by Alfred Stead.

of the Japanese, and asking, "Can these be the result of vicious habits?"

There are certain significant circumstances in connection with the present moral condition in Japan which we must not omit to take into consideration. "Untruthfulness, dishonesty, and brutal crime," says Lafcadio Hearn, speaking of Old Japan, "were rarer then than now, as official statistics show; the percentage of crime having been for some years steadily on the increase—which proves, among other things, that the struggle for existence has been intensified. *The virtue of Japanese wives was generally in all ages above suspicion.*"[1] "If there has been a serious relapse among us," says another writer, "it has been the result of the shock occasioned by our contact with the new civilisation, and fortunately not the consequence of the abandoning of a belief in future punishment by an offended God."[2] (What food for thought—falling off in morality attributed to over-population[3] and contact with Christian civilisation!) How do the Japanese hope to solve this new problem? By Christianity? Not at all. "Men are beginning to see,"

[1] Pp. 147, 148, of Lafcadio Hearn's book, *Kokoro*.

[2] In the *Japan Times*. Quoted by Mr. Moore in his book, *The Christian Faith in Japan*, p. 131.

[3] "If we continued to maintain the high birth-rate of the mid-Victorian epoch, it is certain that, in the course of a few generations, there would be no elbow-room left in our little islands. Already, indeed, Great Britain is, from many points of view, over-populated. If all the people who are now crowded together in the slums of our great towns were scattered over the country, there would be practically no country left. England would have become a vast suburb. That is not an ideal to which any patriotic Englishman would care to look forward. Space and quiet are essential for the development of some of the best qualities of human beings, and those persons who too hastily regret a decline in the birth-rate must explain how they propose to reconcile these essentials with an unlimited increase of our present population" (*The Daily Graphic*, August 17th, 1905, art. "A Declining Birth-rate").

continues the same writer, "that in the domain of morality the excellent precepts and propositions by which their fathers were guided under the old *régime*, but which have since fallen into disrepute, are fundamentally correct, and that, with slight adaptations in the light of the new civilisation, the old code of morality will serve their purpose under the altered circumstances of the new era."[1]

Only the charge of lack of commercial morality has any foundation in fact, and, with regard to this, here is the true explanation, given, not by a Japanese apologist, but by a Christian missionary: "The Japanese are often charged, and with good reason, with a lack of commercial morality. In days when the military virtues reigned supreme, the handling of trade was deemed an employment which no gentleman would take up; hence the commerce of the country is largely in the hands of men who do not represent her best traditions. Again, certain restrictions of mercy were always granted in the undertaking of a contract, whereas foreigners naturally regard a contract as binding unconditionally. But, in both respects, methods of trade are improving, and in the excellent commercial schools it is taught that 'Honesty is the

[1] *The Christian Faith in Japan*, p. 131. The words of others than Japanese writers may not be without some interest. A Christian friend of mine, once an English professor in a Japanese college, wrote to me lately: "I must admit that the Japanese do seem to have attained *without* Christianity a higher status than most Christian nations. Indeed, they appear to attain personal and national excellence without religion at all." Again, another Englishman, who has spent a lifetime and occupies a high position in Japan, remarks (in the course of a letter replying to my queries): "There is not the remotest chance of Christianity becoming the religion of the State. For the last two centuries and a half the educated class have adopted the Agnostic ethical system of Confucius, which, once understood and embraced, can never be dislodged by the Christian or any other variety of theologian."

best policy.' Among members of the humblest ranks of life the most striking instances of honesty will be met with; a jinrikisha man will run after you with the parcel you have forgotten, a shopkeeper will walk to your house to bring you a few cents he accidentally overcharged you."[1]

As to their purely secular education and the severance of belief from conduct, Baron Suyematsu remarks that, "to the outsiders who have not grown up in an atmosphere of this kind, it may appear somewhat difficult to comprehend how boys and girls could be thoroughly imbued with moral sentiments without connecting them in some way with religion; but when these are taught with thoroughness, basing their systematic exposition on the duties of human beings towards one another and to the State, and on the noble tradition of their [the children's] own community and the characteristic virtues of their forefathers in which they ought to rejoice, and when appeals are made to the honour and pride which one should feel and value, and, above all, to the conscience of individuals, one's thoughts appear to become imbued with the lessons conveyed, and moral notions thus taught seem to become, *per se*, a kind of undefined, but nevertheless potent and serviceable, religion."[2] Again, Baron

[1] *The Christian Faith in Japan*, pp. 53, 54. Explanations regarding the shortcomings of the Japanese in the matter of commercial morality will be found in Professor Nitobe's *Bushido*, pp. 64–70, and also, as there mentioned, in Knapp, *Feudal and Modern Japan*, and in Ransome, *Japan in Transition*, ch. viii.

[2] *The Nineteenth Century and After*, February, 1905, art. "Moral Teaching in Japan." An interesting article on "Japanese Education and Character" appeared in *The National Review* for October, 1905. The following are extracts from it:—"The idea of getting a prize for doing one's duty—and one's best is only one's duty—is foreign to

Suyematsu tells us elsewhere that "the educated classes consider that he who does what is good for good's sake, and not for a fear of anything exterior, is the most courageous man, and to be courageous is the most important feature of *Bushido*. The probability is that, were a Japanese gentleman a devout adherent of any particular form of religion, he would rather conceal it than make a display of it."[1]

Yet Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, closes his new book, *The Witness of the Influence of Christ*, with the familiar assertion of the inseparability of religion and ethics. It is an assertion which, now more than ever, the Churches are reiterating. Why? Is it not because they find that many are beginning to doubt its truth? I fear reiteration will not make it any truer. Only facts will appeal to the man who looks below the surface, and these are all the other way.

CRIMINALITY.

To return to the arguments of rational morality. A man may say: "I don't care a bit about this social instinct you tell me of; I don't know that I possess it. It is no use your prating to me about my happiness

Japan.....The stories by which they [the moral maxims] are illustrated are not tales of triumphant strength and conquest—they are stories of self-effacement.....Our nearest analogy would be in the stories of Christian martyrs; but, though the readiness to suffer death would appeal to the Japanese mind, the fact that the martyr died hoping to secure the joys of heaven by his faithfulness would rob the act of its virtue in their eyes.....*Selfishness can never be moral*.....This tremendous moral force of self-control and self-effacement has then, at its root, public opinion, habit, and patriotism—three of the four strongest principles which control our actions. Of the fourth, religious enthusiasm, there seems to be none.....The intense devotion [of the Western] to speculative dogma is quite foreign to the matter-of-fact Japanese mind."

[1] *The Independent Review*, December, 1904, art. "The Religions of Japan."

of mind, and the necessity of my being in harmony with my surroundings. I prefer to gratify the instinct—the passion—that I do feel, regardless of the consequences to others. Of course, I shouldn't like everybody else to do the same. That is the beauty of my scheme, and I am not going to miss my opportunity in the short space of existence you tell me is all that lies before me. If it pleases me to make a beast of myself, I shall do so." All I can say is that a man who really means that this is what he would do, if not deterred by belief, is an unfortunate, with criminal tendencies—is, in fact, of unsound mind. His reasoning, too, is unsound. He must expect others to follow his example, as his argument is that the whole world would become immoral and lawless without belief. He would suffer, therefore, with the rest, and then would be the first, if sane, to coalesce with his other fellow-sufferers in putting down lawlessness. The most savage tribe looks after its own interests according to its lights. A man who disregards the interests of all but himself becomes an Ishmael, an outlaw, a criminal, and, in the approaching Rationalistic age, he will be specially "taken care of," and treated as any other insane person.

What are the causes of criminality? The Devil—man's sinful nature—the Religionist will reply. What does Science reply? Dr. McEwen, of Glasgow, relates in the *Lancet* how a labourer, after falling on his head from a scaffolding, *developed immoral tendencies*. A tumour had formed on his brain. This was successfully removed by trepanning, and *the immoral tendencies disappeared*. Again, Dr. Lydston tells us that Flesch examined the brains of fifty criminals, and found imperfections in all. "Vice and crime," says

Dr. Lydston, "will one day be shown more definitely than ever to be a matter to be dealt with by medical science rather than by law."[1] When brain defects (whether inherited or caused by environment), affecting the moral faculties, are universally recognised as the real source of criminal tendencies; when disease of the brain is no longer regarded as a disease of the soul—then, and not till then, will criminality materially diminish. Science will then triumphantly succeed where theology has dismally failed.

The sooner, therefore, criminality is looked upon as a disease of the brain, and dealt with accordingly, the better it will be for the human race. A day will surely come when, as Mr. Wells predicts,[2] "crime and bad lives will be the measure of a State's failure." The modern Theist now admits that it is God's pleasure to employ law, and not the suspension of law, to work out His purposes. Why, then, whether we are Theists or Atheists, should we not study and apply those laws for our moral improvement?

[1] See p. 221 of Dr. Lydston's book, *The Diseases of Society*.

[2] In his book, *A Modern Utopia*, p. 144. It is customary to scout the idea of State control as the panacea for social evils. One is warned against grandmotherly legislation, interference with the liberty of the private individual, etc. I may be permitted, therefore, to give an illustration of its beneficial effect. The Gothenburg system, by which the liquor traffic is judiciously controlled, has, in spite of all opposition, fought its way victoriously, and is now adopted, although partly modified, in most towns in Sweden, and also in Norway and Finland. Thus the evil effects of drink have been considerably mitigated; intemperance, pauperism, and vice have been reduced. Similarly in Switzerland—in some of the cantons, at all events—the authorities have made up their minds to prohibit the manufacture and sale of absinthe. Would not drastic measures of this nature for the removal of England's greatest curse be far better than half-hearted measures that are palliative rather than remedial? Now that the Church has taken up the temperance cause, could she not bring her great influence to bear towards the introduction of some such system, pitting herself against vested interests?

Even now we are doing so. Rationalism has taught us that prevention is better than cure, and its great ally, Science, is helping both in the prevention and the cure. But the process will be considerably accelerated when our energies and our fortunes are spent altogether in this direction, instead of being frittered away in futile attempts to obtain the same results by "spiritual" methods.

OUR AIDS.

Again the supernaturalist may say: "I grant you, for the sake of argument, that, setting aside the ills of 'outrageous fortune,' the secret of happiness lies in obeying the social instinct; but human nature is weak, and requires assistance. How do you propose to replace the aid derived from belief? I am not a Japanese. I am not an Oriental, with an extraordinary power of self-abnegation for the sake of an idea. I am a phlegmatic Englishman, and I am not at all sure that, even if I had had this *Bushido* instilled into me, my character would have been any stronger than it is now after a Christian education." Here let me again repeat that I do not for one moment contend that, if Christianity were true as *now* interpreted by *liberal* theology, or again, if Theism, with its assurance of a *benevolent* God, were true, that, as Neo-Christians or Theists, we should not be greatly assisted in our efforts to lead a moral and therefore innocently happy life; but an agnosticism regarding all supernatural beliefs appears to be the only possible attitude for an enlightened world, and it is this situation that we have now to face. Is there anything, then, that can in any way take the place of the ethical

assistance[1] afforded by belief in God and an after-life?

The answer of Rationalism has already been indicated—it is to the force of environment (in its broadest sense) that we must look in our struggle with hereditary weaknesses. We cannot get rid of our inherited qualities; but we can modify them by changing our environment. If our early education, our early environment, has been neglected, we still have it in our power to remedy, or partly remedy, this unfortunate circumstance by our choice of present environment. The hard case is that of a man so situated that to change his evil environment seems well-nigh impossible. Therefore it is that the reduction of pernicious environments is of paramount importance to the race, and this truth the Rationalistic spirit of the age is now forcing to the front. Also, if the individual takes no interest in posterity, and refuses to study the law of heredity, the day will come when the law of the land will see to it that the sins or diseases of the fathers shall *not* be

[1] It may not be out of place to mention here that various Ethical Societies in England (and her Colonies), Europe, and America are doing all they can to meet the ethical needs of Agnostics, and their efforts deserve far greater support than they have yet received from the wealthy. For this want of sympathy there are many obvious reasons—reasons fortunately, that will disappear in the near future. It will be urged that the truly pious and honest believer finds prayer of the greatest help towards right conduct, while the unbelieving ethicist is destitute of this aid. I do not propose now to discuss the ethical value of prayer, or consider the causes of its success and failure; but I would ask the reader to refer to my remarks in Chapter VI. on the psychology of prayer. Personally, I am of opinion that the practice of *auto-suggestion* will prove useful to those in need of such assistance. I cannot enter into details here regarding the manner of its employment; but, so far as it lies in my power, I shall be happy to supply information on this subject to the *bona-fide* inquirer. One day (let us hope at no distant date) psychical research may lead to the discovery of a complete and scientific method for the toughening of our moral fibres.

visited upon the children "unto the third and fourth generation." It is the quality, not the quantity, of our children that we have to keep to the forefront.[1] The methods will be simple,[2] if somewhat drastic; but the need to apply them will continue to lessen in proportion as the laws of heredity and environment are better kept in view. "Over the past, represented by our own heredity, we have no control. We cannot change the facts which have made the degenerate, the neurotic, the hysterical, and the criminal; but these are only names for human beings who, by a certain train of causation, have had certain impulses developed and others left fallow or suppressed. A different train of causation will awaken the capabilities to hold these impulses in due check. This future, now represented by the environment, is greatly within our power. Heredity being but the transmitted effects of past environments, we have to make a suitable environment for growing organisms if we wish to mould them to our ideals; and this is the meaning of education."[3]

[1] "This is the great problem in a nutshell: to improve the quality and diminish the quantity of mankind—that is, in proportion to the means of securing for each a truly human life." "Is not the quality rather than the quantity of children the thing to be aimed at?" (Mona Caird and Lady Grove on "The Position of Women," see pp. 118 and 128 of the *Fortnightly Review* for July, 1905.) Dr. Barnardo and "General" Booth may get over the "unemployed" difficulty by their excellently-organised schemes for emigration to Canada and elsewhere; but this is, at best, only a very temporary remedy. At the present moment this problem presses for a very early solution in India. For many months in the year, as I have again and again seen with my own eyes, masses of the agricultural population are entirely without employment. Hence the constantly recurring famines, or partial famines, in years of bad or indifferent rainfall.

[2] Mr. H. G. Wells furnishes us with some novel ideas on this point in his book, *A Modern Utopia*, chap. vii., §§ 2–5. If we cannot prevent degenerates from marrying, at least we can abolish an environment that assists heredity in their production.

[3] See pp. 25-6 of Stanley de Brath's *The Foundations of Success.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE ORIGIN OF MORALITY.

Finally, it is very necessary that the origin of morality, as indicated by Darwin, should be better known and understood. Only recently a well-known writer on ethics, Prince Kropotkin, pointed out[1] that the question of morality has hitherto been dealt with on wrong lines. This remark applies not only to the

[1] See Prince Kropotkin's articles in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (August, 1904, and March, 1905), entitled "The Ethical Need of the Present Day" and "The Morality of Nature." Anyone wishing to know why we *must* lead the moral life should not fail to read these instructive articles. Again, in the *Contemporary Review* for October, 1904, there is an interesting article entitled "Animal Marriage," by Dr. Woods Hutchinson, which affords us a useful lesson in an important branch of ethics. We are shown that the sexual morality of animals in their *free* state is vastly superior to what most of us imagine, and we are given some capital illustrations of the effect of an unfavourable environment. The following quotations may convey some idea: "The more closely we study animals, the less we feel disposed to boast of our superiority. Some of us may even find ourselves in the position of the newly-converted Cingalese chief, who, when told by the missionary that he must break up his harem to live a Christian life, exclaimed aghast: 'White man only one wife all life long? How disgusting! Just like Wanderoo monkeys!'" Speaking of the looseness of morals in domestic animals due to the changed conditions under which they are placed, we are told: "In the case of certain animals, notably the pig, from an exceeding close monogamist, with a union lasting probably for life, and one of the best and most attentive of fathers, he has become as promiscuous and indifferent as a modern club man. A similar change has taken place in the dog, if, as seems almost certain, he is a civilised wolf." To show how ducks and geese have become polygamous under domestication, we are told how a Harvard lecturer entertained his pupils with the following little anecdote from nature: "In an enclosure in a public garden were confined several pairs of different species of wild ducks, mallards, pintails, and teal. All went well until one spring one of the mallard ducks tired of her lawful spouse, and conceived a violent fancy for a handsome pintail drake. He was at first bored by her attentions, and, having a wife of his own, indignantly repelled her advances for some time; but, finally yielding to her flatteries, he deserted his pintail spouse, thrashed the mallard husband in single combat, and went off with the designing female. 'Here, ladies and gentlemen,' the lecturer commented drily, 'you have all the ingredients of the modern society novel, excepting the temporary virtue of the pintail drake.'"

Christian teaching, but to the teaching of Agnostics and non-Christian religionists. It applies to the ethical and sociological portions of Herbert Spencer's philosophy which follow the lines of pre-Darwinian ethical thought, and also to the works of those speculative philosophers[1] who have denied the empirical origin of man's moral feeling, and who have had recourse to subtle and unconvincing theories in order to assign a supernatural origin to the moral senses. These thinkers, in attempting to explain the "distinction of man," the " why of existence," and the "aim of nature," set themselves the hopeless task of

[1] Dr. Paul Topinard (late General Secretary of the Anthropological Society of Paris) states what, I think, are the average Rationalist's views on speculative philosophies in chapter viii. of his book, *Science and Faith* (translated from the author's MS. by T. J. McCormack for Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co.). I take the following from pp. 245–7: "Human knowledge has passed through three stages—one of faith and theology, one of conceptions or metaphysics, and one of observation or science. Speculative philosophy, like religion, is the *outcome of the belief in the supernatural held by man in his more or less primitive state.* It is *opposed to science.* It answers to the impatient need of man to explain at once things which elude his comprehension. The philosophic spirit and the spirit which created arts and letters have as common characters their subjectivity, their need of imagining and of constructing, and their *firm belief in the reality of their conceptions.* Philosophy, when we clearly see its first expansion, is almost immediately at its culminating point, very likely *because it was not yet bothered by science.* Gradually it recognised that outside the facts there is nothing solid, but for a long time it could not tear itself from its illusions. At the present day it still lives, but is *losing its initial character*, and sees itself obliged more and more to reckon with science and practice." I am convinced that many refuse point-blank to inquire into their belief, because they have been led to think that this will entail their wading through a mass of philosophical writings, and because they expect to find the latter either incomprehensible or unconvincing. Even Hegel, who turns to history rather than to abstract speculations, and simply ignores the miraculous, has presented the world with what is confessedly one of the most difficult of all philosophies. Metaphysics does not, and never will, appeal to the average man. He agrees with the scoffer who says: "When the man who is speaking no longer knows what he is talking about, and the man who is listening never knew what he was talking about, that is metaphysics!"

explaining a process which entails untold suffering upon sentient beings, and in which the modern Rationalist is unable to discover any ethical principle whatsoever. Too much prominence cannot be given to the later conclusions of modern thought so eloquently set forth by Prince Kropotkin. So soon as the Darwinian theory of the origin of morals is fully accepted, great strides in the development of an improved morality will surely follow.[1] "Science, far from destroying the foundations of ethics, as it is so often accused of doing, gives to evolutionist ethics a philosophical certitude where the transcendental thinker had only a vague intuition to rely upon."[2]

OPINIONS OF ETHICISTS.

Let me now quote some instructive utterances by Rationalists[3]:—

"The foundation of morality is to have done, once and for all, with lying; to give up pretending to believe that for which there is no evidence, and repeating unintelligible propositions about things beyond the possibilities of knowledge. She [Science] knows that the safety of morality lies neither in the

[1] Much as I appreciate all Mr. S. Laing's writings, and especially, perhaps, his chapter on "Practical Life" with which he closes his admirable work on *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, I cannot quite agree with him when he says (p. 113 of the R. P. A. Cheap Reprint): "For practical purposes it is comparatively unimportant how this [the moral] standard got there." It is, in my humble opinion, very important, for the reasons that are clearly demonstrated by Prince Kropotkin and other modern ethicists.

[2] Prince Kropotkin in *The Nineteenth Century*.

[3] "Rationalism may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority" (from the Memorandum of the Aims and Objects of the Rationalist Press Association).

adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, nor this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of nature which sends social disorganisation upon the track of immorality, as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses. And of that firm and lively faith it is her mission to be priestess."[1] "Theological apologists, who insist that morality will vanish if their dogmas are exploded, would do well to consider the fact that, in the matter of intellectual veracity, science is already a long way ahead of the Churches; and that, in this particular, it is exerting an educational influence on mankind of which the Churches have shown themselves utterly incapable."[2]—HUXLEY.

"A moral life is that form of existence which is based upon obedience to natural and social law.....By long transmission and inheritance of mental and physical qualities a certain moral sense, so to say, has been developed, now called 'conscience,' which suggests acts often amounting to self-sacrifice, and condemns and represses others, pleasant and even profitable to the individual, because detrimental to the race. Altruism and Utilitarianism have come to be so insensibly blended that it is difficult to detect where the one begins and the other ends.....We have attained a natural and instinctive preference for what is good and noble in conduct, irrespective of self-interest, just as we have risen to an instinctive appreciation of fine music and delicate perfume.....The moral life is derived from the universal experience of mankind, approved by the wisdom of the wise, and

[1] Closing words of Professor Huxley's Essay, *Science and Morals*.
[2] Essay entitled "An Episcopal Trilogy," p. 312 of *Essays on Controverted Questions* (Macmillan & Co.).

justified by the fate of the foolish."[1] ["We needs must love the noblest when we see it."]—THE AUTHOR OF "SUPERNATURAL RELIGION."

"The Supernaturalists charge the system of the Rationalists with a lack of any effective motive that can constrain ordinary and average men to live a moral life. 'It is all very well,' they say, 'for your Spinozas, your Stuart Mills, and such like, to affect independence of supernatural sanctions, because they are exceptional men, and have powers of discernment and will, by which they appropriate to themselves the moral doctrine and practice of Christianity, while they refuse to acknowledge their debt.'.....I daresay I might, with some success, retort the argument of Supernaturalism. 'It is all very well,' I might say, 'for your apostles and saints, for your Augustines and Luthers and Bunyans, to depend on supernatural sanctions, because they are exceptional men, and have powers of imagination which turn shadows into substance.'.....There is such a thing as self-respect; no man likes to feel ashamed of himself. There are very few who are not strongly moved by a desire to see wife and children or parents happy. Such influences as these have far more to do with moulding human life and resisting selfish passion than any fear of hell or desire of heaven, or any philosophical principles. And such influences as these will survive even when open denial of supernatural sanction becomes as general as tacit disbelief is now."[2]—J. ALLANSON PICTON.

"For the mass of mankind, two motives serve to

[1] Art. "Why Live a Moral Life?" in the *Agnostic Annual*, 1895.
[2] *Ibid.*

direct the main course of ethics. These are Prudence and Sympathy.....Prudence is the first step in morality.....Sympathy did not wait to be called into life by religion. It was born among the brutes..... In the case of man the sympathy which issues first through the natural emotions of family and sex is spread over an ever-widening area by the power of imagination. A greater faculty of entering into the feelings of others goes along with a deeper sensitiveness to their pains and joys. Their experience becomes ours. Our self is blended with theirs. We pity their actual sufferings, and, calling up in imagination the suffering our conduct might entail, we shrink from committing a wrong.....Pity is the characteristic mark of the later ethics."[1]—F. J. GOULD.

"One can say without exaggeration that the most religious times and the most religious peoples, or those in which or among whom the power of the Church has been the strongest, have, generally speaking, been the most immoral. One has evidence enough in the horrors of the Middle Ages, and, if to-day it be otherwise, it is not to religion we owe the change, but to the spread of education and the progress of intelligence.....It is one of the fatalest and most widespread of errors that morality without religion is impossible. It has long been scientifically acknowledged that morality, as such, is far older than religion.....Morality comes only as the consequence and result of the inevitable necessities of social intercourse."[2]—LUDWIG BÜCHNER.

"The religion of the lower orders of Welshmen

[1] Art. "Why Live a Moral Life?" in the *Agnostic Annual*, 1895.
[2] *Ibid.*

may be said to be high in the scale, while their morality is decidedly low.....What savage nations have been raised out of their degradation by Christianity?.....I look upon the doctrine of future rewards and punishments as radically bad, and as bad for savages as for civilised men."—ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.[1]

"Heaven and hell have no more relation to the question than any other punishments. The hell which a thoroughly bad man dreads can only be a hell of physical suffering; and, if he abstains from crime through fear of fire, he is not a good man, but a bad man in chains."[2]—LESLIE STEPHEN.

"Where is the seat of authority for what is moral? This is a very old question. Manu, the Indian lawgiver, answers it in four ways: It rests on revelation (*scuti*); it rests on tradition (*smriti*); it rests on the behaviour of good people; and, lastly, it rests on inward satisfaction. I believe that, in the end, the last is the supreme authority."[3]—F. MAX MÜLLER.

"Whatever power the threats of punishment and the promises of reward in an after-life may have had in lawless and superstitious ages, they have now but the smallest effect on conduct; their remoteness exhausts their power, and, moreover, the belief in them is slowly decaying.....All the law and commandments are in the Golden Rule; all ethics in the teaching that, if man be true to himself, he cannot be false to his fellows."[4]—EDWARD CLODD.

"The first step towards the elaboration of a morality

[1] Quoted from his Autobiography, entitled *My Life: A Record of Events and Opinions* (Chapman & Hall).
[2] Art. "Why Live a Moral Life?" in the *Agnostic Annual*, 1895.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] P. 121 of *The Story of Creation* (R. P. A. Cheap Reprint).

which should exercise a lasting influence is to base it upon an ascertained truth.....The function of ethics is not even so much to insist upon the defects of man and to reproach him with his 'sins,' as to act in the positive direction by appealing to man's best instincts. .....It tells to man that, if he desires to live a life in which all forces—physical, intellectual, and emotional —should find a full exercise, he must, once and for all, abandon the idea that such a life is attainable on the path of disregard for others.....What is wanted now is a new comprehension of morality in its methods, which must be freed from both the transcendental survivals and the narrow conceptions of philistine utilitarianism. The importance of *mutual aid* in the evolution of the animal world and human history may be taken as a positive established scientific truth..... Mutual aid, justice, morality, are thus the consecutive steps of an ascending series, revealed to us by the study of the animal world and man. It is not something imposed from the *outside:* it is an organic necessity which carries in itself its own justification."[1] —PRINCE KROPOTKIN.

"We do not see any convincing reason why morals should be based upon the teaching of a special denomination, in face of the fact that we can be upright and brave without the help of a creed with a God or deities at its other end."[2]—PROFESSOR OKAKURA.

"I regard religion itself as quite unnecessary for a nation's life; science is far above superstition; and

[1] *The Nineteenth Century and After*, August, 1904, art. "The Ethical Need of the Present Day."

[2] Quoted from a little volume recently published, entitled *The Japanese Spirit*. (Constable.)

what is religion, Buddhism or Christianity, but superstition, and therefore a possible source of weakness to a nation? I do not regret the tendency to freethought and atheism, which is almost universal in Japan, because I do not regard it as a source of danger to the community."[1]—MARQUIS ITO.

"Cardinal Newman once said: 'Give me the children of England, and England shall be *Roman Catholic*.' *We* say: 'Put the children of England under the best moral influences, and England shall be righteous.'"[2]—THE MORAL INSTRUCTION LEAGUE.

[1] Cited by Mr. L. Gulick, an American missionary organiser, in his work on *The Evolution of the Japanese*.

[2] Quoted from a leaflet of the Moral Instruction League. The object of the Moral Instruction League (19, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.) is to introduce systematic non-theological moral instruction into all schools, and to make the formation of character the chief aim of school life. Their contention is—and it seems a wise one—that ethical principles on which we all agree should not be associated, in the schools of the State, with theological principles on which we all differ. Some education authorities are now already commencing to provide for systematic moral instruction of a purely secular nature. In the West Riding scheme it is expressly stated that it is to be "part of the *secular* instruction," while the Cheshire scheme emphatically lays down that the moral instruction must be non-theological. The authorities of Gorton, Blackpool, Norwich, York, and elsewhere, have supplied all the teachers of their schools with copies of the Moral Instruction League's *Graduated Syllabus of Moral Instruction for Elementary Schools*. The West Riding Education Authority has adopted the Syllabus, and it is now in use in the 1,270 schools, Provided and Non-Provided, of that authority. In addition to these, numerous education authorities have decided to make provision for moral instruction a part of the *secular* instruction in their schools. Among some excellent little works intended to assist parents and teachers in the non-theological character-training of their children, I may mention F. J. Gould's *The Children's Book of Moral Lessons* (Watts & Co.) and A. J. Waldegrave's *A Teacher's Handbook of Moral Lessons* (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.).

NOTE ON SYSTEMATIC MORAL INSTRUCTION.

This year a Memorial was addressed to the Local Education Authorities of the country. Among the signatories are Lord Rosebery, Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, Lord Kelvin, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, a number of bishops, "General" Booth, Dr. Horton, Dr. Campbell, the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, etc. They recommend that the eight or ten years of school life should provide the opportunity, not only for imparting knowledge, but for inculcating those habits of self-restraint, conscientiousness, fidelity, honour, and kindness which are needful alike for individual self-respect and national well-being. Sir Oliver Lodge has urged the same thing in the *Nineteenth Century*. At last, then, it has been influentially recognised that these things are not taught in schools, or, if so, are taught in an indifferent and unsystematic manner. What a reflection upon Christian methods of upbringing hitherto! Unfortunately, coupled with this desire for effective moral training, the signatories of the Memorial express a hope that Bible teaching will be continued. I say "unfortunately," because the ethical value of the Bible is inextricably intertwined with supernatural beliefs that are demonstrably false. Any temporary success of such teaching, while the children are still uninformed of the real nature of the Bible, will be heavily discounted in after years—at a time, too, when assistance from the ethical teaching of childhood will be most needed. It is an unfortunate circumstance that the Church must necessarily be fearful regarding the separation of belief and morality—must set her face against non-theological teaching. It is no use disguising the fact. Her fears are perfectly well founded—such teaching *would* tend to the further spread of unbelief. On the other hand, it is equally clear that, if any temporary harm comes of this spread—a spread which, in any case, cannot be stopped, though it can be delayed—it will be through this false teaching. The Church, in fact, will be directly responsible for the evil. Is it not time, then, for all thoughtful believers to be up and doing? Is it not time to speak out? In the following sections we shall see that this course is advisable on every ground.

§ 3. *Should the Unbeliever Speak Out?*

Presuming that we have come to the conclusion that Christianity is not true, are we to say so, or are we to be silent? A believer, with ideas so advanced that his belief amounts to little more than "a reverent agnosticism" concerning the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, is still able to speak out, because while he destroys he also constructs. He has new interpretations of Christianity to offer us. The unbeliever can offer no such interpretations. He simply believes Christianity to be untrue, and, should he give his reasons, he knows he may persuade others to think so also. He must, therefore, it seems, keep his unbelief to himself, unless he is prepared to show that the destruction of belief will be beneficial. In considering this question of frank avowal of our unbelief, we must not forget that, try as we may to avoid it, we are bound from time to time to find ourselves in a position where we have to choose between telling the truth or telling a lie; while our silence, or any manœuvre with intent to deceive, is one continual evasion of the truth. Is it not time, as John Morley urges,[1] to abandon "those habits of hypocritical conformity and compliance which have filled the air of the England of to-day with gross and obscure mists"? In moral life truth is our guide, so that the arguments for its repression must be irrefutable. Now, if it can be shown that the objections to candour are more imaginary than real, not only are we robbed of the excuse for further concealment, but we are morally bound to fly our true colours openly. Nor is this all. Should it become plain to us that actual good will

[1] In his masterly work, *On Compromise*.

come of truth-telling, or that the probable good far outweighs the possible evil, it behoves us to take an active part in, or at least to lend our support to, the ventilation of religious questions.

1. "MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRÆVALEBIT."

One very natural objection of unbelievers, who are not actually disbelievers, is that there may be, after all, some truth in Christianity. We find here every shade of opinion, from that of the man who still hopes that Christianity may be proved true in all essentials, to that of the man who thinks that Christianity may be the symbol of a truth. But, I ask, will not Christianity, if true in any shape or form, benefit by truth-telling? Will it not thereby assume its true form, whatever that may eventually prove to be, and is not that a consummation to be desired? Many believers stoutly maintain that Christianity can be only strengthened by attack; so that, on the face of this assertion, it would appear both justifiable and desirable to take them at their word, and, without more ado, proceed to attack Christianity. Certain it is that, so far, Rationalistic attacks have done inestimable good in disclosing its errors in doctrine and practice. As Mr. Morley caustically remarks, the efforts of the heterodox have taught the Church to be better Christians than they were a hundred years ago. If Christianity, purified in the cleansing fire of modern criticism, be the true faith, and the theory of progressive revelation can be accepted, is not this truer faith and this peculiarly rapid progress of revelation during late years the product of scepticism? It is the sceptics who have succeeded in forcing the Church to reconsider her doctrines and discover new truths, and,

wonderful as it may appear, they have thus been God's special instruments in this more perfect revelation of Himself. Why, then, should you hesitate to speak out? Christianity evidently has to be re-stated if it is to survive, and this re-statement must be complete, for on it rests the only chance of reclaiming the unbeliever, of arresting the further spread of Agnosticism, and of converting the cultured heathen—the only chance of a universal belief in God and Immortality. Of the result you have no cause to fear. If there be a God, He is a God of Truth, and the Truth will prevail.

2. OBSCURANTISM HAS HAD ITS DAY.

The Rev. V. F. Storr, at the Liverpool Church Congress (1904), advocated telling the truth regarding established facts, and asked: "In how many pulpits are the opening chapters of Genesis frankly treated as legendary? How many teachers in schools, if called upon to give a lesson on the Fall, would make plain to the children that the framework of the story is imaginative? Are not the teachers creating for them the very difficulties which, when they come to mature years, will make shipwreck of their faith?" These remarks, however, were received in dead silence by a bigoted audience, and the President was vociferously cheered when he asked: "Are we to tell the children that these narratives are mere fables, with a moral teaching, or, as Dr. Wace said, that they are true and historical, only clothed in an Eastern symbolism? I prefer to stand with Dr. Wace." I should mention that Dr. Wace also said: "If I were on Mr. Blatchford's side, and wanted to attack Christianity, I should desire nothing better than that the

results of criticism concerning Genesis, as these results predominate even in the most sober critical circles, should be adopted by the Christian Church, because this would afford a means of attacking Christianity with greater force than anything else, since it would enable me to start with this vantage-ground, that all the Jews and all the apostles—I dare not speak of our Lord—were mistaken in their view of God's relation to his own people." Fraud is, therefore, recommended, in spite of the danger to the rising generation, because the purpose is a pious one—namely, to confute the unbeliever and to maintain the Faith. The anti-Christian must be deprived of his vantage-ground by the denial of truth. It is the old, old story of "pious fraud," the mainstay of the Christian Faith. Are we to imitate the practices of the Roman and Greek Churches, and continue to play upon a man's credulity and ignorance? Are we to understand that pious frauds are still considered legitimate weapons to employ in the defence of Christianity? If on no higher grounds, such weapons should be allowed to fall into disuse for the simple reason that the spread of education is rendering them obsolete, and the days of obscurantism are numbered. Christian Fathers can no longer publish their own writings in the names of disciples and apostles in order to insure their acceptance. Evidences against the truth of Christianity can no longer be destroyed or suppressed by persecution. "Miracles" can no longer be worked (except where people are still grossly credulous or ignorant).[1] It is true, passages

[1] "One cares for Russia," writes a correspondent of the *Church Times*, "because that country alone in Europe remains Christian to its very core—remains the only country in which confessed saints,

of the Bible can still be read in church which every educated man knows to be, to put it mildly, unhistorical, and consoles his conscience by calling allegorical. True, in our churches, with but few exceptions, the white lie of silence is daily told. But even mild pious frauds of this nature will soon be a thing of the past. The Higher Critics and the advanced school of the Church will see to this. They are beginning to speak out—why should not you? The obscurantist would do well to take to heart the answer of Bishop Colenso to the clergyman who reproached him with depraving one of his parishioners by criticisms of the Pentateuch. Colenso replied that the blame would be more fittingly attached to the teachers who led people "to rest their faith in God and duty on a foundation of falsehood which every new wave of thought was sweeping away."[1] Shall we, to give a glaring instance of pious obstruction, revert to the time—not many years ago—when the use of anæsthetics in surgery was denounced from the pulpit, on the ground of impiety? I think not. Nowadays one can hardly keep one's countenance in recalling the words of those who seriously, and, as they thought, piously, said that they would rather suffer any pain than "enter the presence of their Maker in a state of intoxication." We no longer listen to those who would forbid us either to taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge or to give it to others. Obscurantism, Christianity's best friend, is breathing its last. It can, therefore, no longer be depended upon.

like Father John of Cronstadt, live and testify and work miracles. Almost only in Russia are we carried back to the first ages of the faith." (See *Church Times* of March 17th, 1905.) Comment is superfluous.

[1] Recorded in *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe, as Told by Herself.* (Sonnenschein.)

3. THE EFFECT ON MORALITY.

Anxiety regarding the effect on morality, private and public, chiefly accounts, no doubt, for the present conspiracy of silence. I have already gone into this question in some detail,[1] and we have seen that belief and morality are not necessarily Siamese twins, and that, when the belief is false, and still more, of course, when it is known or suspected to be false, it is no longer of any possible ethical value, but quite the reverse. Should you demur, I have a question to ask, which is this: Now that, whether we wish it or no, the truth about Christianity is fast leaking out and disbelief is rapidly spreading in consequence, how is it that you, how is it that the State, how is it that the majority outside the Church, display so peculiarly little anxiety? I confess I am at a loss to understand, unless it be that you and they have realised that morality is a thing apart from belief, and therefore feel that there is little cause for uneasiness. There is, however, an element of danger, and, temporary though it may be, it is sure, if disregarded, to affect the private and public morality of our own times.

4. THE REAL DANGER.

The real danger lurks, where least suspected, in the very method which you advocate as the safest—the method of a gradual infiltration. In many matters such a method is undoubtedly sound. A reformation involving a complete revolution in opinions is best carried out gradually and tentatively. In this respect, nature's slow processes of evolution provide a useful lesson for the too ardent reformer.

[1] See § 3 of the last Chapter and § 2 of the present.

I do not suggest a cataclysm, or suppose it possible. But I do say that your infiltration process must be carefully watched and tended, although a policy of masterly inactivity and *laissez-faire* may appeal to you as the easiest; I do say with Mr. Trevelyan that "true opinions do not spread always, and of their own force, but sometimes, and only by dint of courageous avowal";[1] I do say that in this particular instance it is absolutely necessary that, side by side with a knowledge of the untruth of the Christian religion, there should be inculcated a knowledge of the true origin and need of morality; I do say that the infiltration process need not and ought not to be prolonged indefinitely, and that insincerity of any kind affects character banefully; I do say that you should not allow your children to be taught a false belief and a false basis of morality. This conspiracy of silence is as mistaken and mischievous as that by which boys and girls are allowed to find out for themselves what they should have had properly put to them by their parents and guardians. When the Church teaching, when the dogmas contained in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, are removed, the rational teaching must take its place *at one and the same time.*

5. THE CONSOLATIONS OF BELIEF, AND THE DISTRESS WE MAY CAUSE BY OUR CANDOUR.

We cannot stop to inquire how this or that private interest will suffer when the theological mist has been dispelled. When machinery was invented—or, again, when slavery was abolished—enormous interests were affected. Such things will always

[1] P. 392 of *The Independent Review*, December, 1904.

adjust themselves. There is one difficulty, however, which we all feel very strongly, and which cannot be passed over lightly. We have to consider the distress of mind which the truth will cause to those who still firmly believe, and for whom their religion is so great a consolation that to be robbed of it would make life objectless—a dreary desert of despair. Have we, then, any right to disturb people's belief and to lacerate their feelings? It would almost appear, as Mr. Winwood Reade remarks, that "we can do nothing that is exclusively and absolutely good. *Le genre humain n'est pas placé entre le bien et le mal, mais entre le mal et le pire.*" Just as multitudes of martyrs are now suffering in unhappy Russia for the sake of its eventual reform, just as throughout history mankind owe their elevation to misfortune and their happiness to misery, so here, also, it seems as if the elevation and happiness in store for mankind after their liberation from superstition can only be achieved through suffering. In our times this mental revolution will be bloodless; but it cannot be altogether tearless. Let us see whether the mental anguish will be as great as we imagine, and also whether it is not in the power of each one of us to adopt a line of conduct which will tend towards a vast reduction in the number of those who must pass through the vale of tears.

Are you and I any unhappier than the believer? Many of us have passed through an ordeal more or less severe before finally relinquishing our cherished beliefs. I will speak of that presently. But are we *now* any less happy than our fellows who are believers? Except for the unhappiness which our outspoken confession of belief may have brought upon us, surrounded as we are by believers and professing believers,

I think we can, with confidence, say we are not; while this possible cause of unhappiness is precisely the one which will disappear so soon as the vast multitude of unbelievers agree to tell the truth. No longer then shall we seem to be, as now, in a minority. Very good. We are, or should be, quite as happy as believers; may we not suppose that, after the effect of a rude awakening from a beautiful dream has passed off, the convert to unbelief will settle down into the same condition of mind as ourselves? We are free from anxiety regarding the terrible fate that some of our Christian brethren still see fit to hold over us; but in place of their anxiety concerning an eternal after-life, which may be blissful or may be gruesome, the worst we expect is an eternal peace—an undisturbed sleep, such as we hope for every night when we retire to rest.

> After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.

We are Agnostics, and we can preserve an agnosticism concerning the continuance of consciousness after death, but that is all.

> And if there be no meeting past the grave,
> If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest;
> Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
> For God still "giveth his belovèd sleep,"
> And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.[1]

Can we state it as our honest opinion that the consolations of belief enter into the every-day life of the average man, influencing thereby his state of happiness? No, we cannot. Only on rare occasions, in

[1] *Browning's Funeral*, a poem by Mrs. Huxley. The last three lines were inscribed, at Prof. Huxley's request, upon his grave-stone (in St. Marylebone Cemetery, East Finchley).

times of bereavement, or in time of his own approaching death, will he turn to his belief for consolation. Does he then obtain the consolation he looks for? Again the answer must be in the negative. Here and there we come across examples of a happy resignation such as we should expect to find; but usually it is far otherwise. No one nurses his grief longer than the average Christian; no one is more unwilling to die—he is really more anxious to live than Hindoo, Parsee, Mohammedan, or Buddhist believer, or Japanese Agnostic. Whether it be that Agnosticism engenders a spirit of resignation to the inevitable, it is difficult to say; but the fact remains that no one accepts the ills of life more cheerfully, no one meets his death more bravely, than the average Agnostic. Have you never heard of the deaths of unbelievers quite as beautiful in their serene calm as those of devout believers? I have. These may be exceptional cases; but they are exceptional, also, among believers. According as a man is possessed of self-control, or is naturally fearless or resigned, so will his conduct or feelings be affected. We are speaking, mind you, of averages; and I maintain that bereavements and death are met by the average Agnostic with as much resignation as by the average Christian who has religious consolation to fall back upon.

After all, is it not the fear of death which supplies the chief motive for religion? Even the emotion called forth by the death of a friend is not solely the feeling of the loss. It is partly because death has been brought very near to ourselves. Now, as the consolation afforded by religion in our last hours is continually held up to us by the priest as a reward

for belief, one would expect to find that occasions where this consolation was unnecessary would be few and far between. The reverse is the case, however. Eliminating the cases of sudden death—from which, oddly enough, good Christians are continually praying to be delivered—how seldom are these consolations of utility? Inquire, if you doubt, from any medical man what are his experiences among the dying; how many are not even aware that they are dying; how many are too much taken up with their physical sufferings, or too anxious to be relieved from them, to think of anything else; how many die in a space of time so brief, calculating from the moment when first made aware of their dying condition, that their case is practically one of sudden death; how many are unconscious from the period when their life is first in danger; how many have the knowledge of their approaching death carefully concealed from them by kind-hearted doctors and relations, albeit both the patient and his attendants say they believe in a supremely happy existence after death? Far more often than not the religious consolation so frequently and solemnly held up to us by the priest as an inducement to believe is never enjoyed. Does it not furnish a damaging commentary on one of the strongest arguments for belief—the argument from religious consolation?

Taking these facts into consideration, we find ourselves able to approach the question of disturbing belief with a somewhat lighter heart. Still, we have to remember that the belief in these religious consolations is a very real one for staunch believers. Could we be sure of impressing them with our own convictions concerning these consolations, all would be well;

but we cannot be sure. Here lies the crux. The idea that they are deriving, and will derive, consolation when the dread moment is at hand, has become far too fixed for painless extraction. You may only succeed in partially divesting them of their belief, making them thoroughly miserable to no purpose; or, if you do succeed, it may only be after you have put them to considerable mental distress. What is to be done, then? It is a hard question. Feeling this, we give the matter up in despair, and remain silent. And so the truth which we might have spread, each one of us in his own circle, remains unspoken.

Worse still, the untruth is perpetuated by permitting our children to be brought up in the false beliefs[1] of our believing friends. This, at least, should make us

[1] For a specious argument in defence of the practice of teaching children spiritual truths by means of fairy tales without explaining to them that they are only fairy tales, commend me to the following, abstracted from an article in the *Church Times* of October 21st, 1904, headed "The Teacher and the Bible":—"The difficulty which some people find in a more reasonable use of the Bible, especially in teaching children, is for the most part imaginary. Let them consider the methods followed in giving children other kinds of instruction. Illustrations are employed without any careful separation of fact and fiction. Even fairy tales are pressed—not too obviously, if the teacher is wise—into the service of morality. Legendary stories are used to arouse an interest in the past, and care is taken only to make the local colouring true. History is enriched with details that are as purely dramatic as the speeches of Thucydides. As the child's judgment developes, he is gradually taught to distinguish between the actual records of fact and the pictorial surroundings in which they have been presented, between the moral principles inculcated and the illustrative fables. He does not resent the method which has been followed; he does not complain that he has been deceived, or lose confidence in his teacher. In all probability he will return constantly to the old illustrations.... especially when he has got over the first consciousness of being grown-up, and will use them in his turn for the instruction of the next generation. What is there to hinder the like use of the Bible? It contains much genuine history—probably far more than many critical readers are disposed to admit. It contains also much allegory. *The teacher of religion has no need to discriminate nicely between history and allegory.*" (The italics are mine.)

pause and reflect. Are we justified in keeping silence? Are we justified in making no effort to save the future generation from mental distress or from, what is far worse, a demoralising indifference? The dilemma is great, but that is no reason for shirking it. It must be faced, and the *pros* and *cons* carefully weighed. Is there, haply, no middle course that we may steer? We should not unnecessarily cause distress to the aged who have, their whole life long, cherished this belief, who have arrived at a time of life when ideas are not easily changed, and who feel their life is drawing to a close, and that now more than ever they require the consolation they have built their lives upon. We should spare their feelings all we can; but we must, so it seems to me, put both them and ourselves to such distress as may arise from telling them plainly, when absolutely necessary, that we do not believe in the truth of Christianity, and do not think it right to bring up our children to what we consider is a false belief. We have seen that religious tolerance is the growing spirit of the age, that some of our greatest divines extol[1] the virtues of the Agnostic, and condemn[2] obscurantism and the *odium*

[1] See Chapter I., p. 30.

[2] We have a striking example of this in Dean Farrar's *The Bible and the Child*. The passage runs as follows: "There are a certain number of persons who, when their minds have become stereotyped in foregone conclusions, are simply *incapable* of grasping new truths. They become obstructionists, and not infrequently bigoted obstructionists. As convinced as the Pope of their own personal infallibility, their attitude towards those who see that the old views are no longer tenable is an attitude of anger and alarm. This is the usual temper of the *odium theologicum*. It would, if it could, grasp the thumbscrew and the rack of mediæval Inquisitors, and would, in the last resource, hand over all opponents to the scaffold or the stake. Those whose intellects have been thus petrified by custom and advancing years are, of all others, the most hopeless to deal with. They have made themselves incapable of fair and rational examination of the

theologicum? Shall we then after all, in these days, cause so very much distress by our confessions of unbelief? As a rule, I think not.

6. CAN WE ALTER PEOPLE'S BELIEFS?

Another objection to "speaking out" is that we can never alter people's beliefs. Many well-known Agnostics still hold this opinion. In his essay, "The Religion of All Sensible Men," Sir Leslie Stephen expresses this opinion in the following words: "I do not wish to underrate modern progress; but surely there is something grotesque in the hypothesis that the average shopkeeper or artisan of the present day is too clever to believe in the creeds of his forefathers. I fancy that no one has yet ascertained that the brain of to-day is more capacious than the brains of the contemporaries of Cæsar or St. Paul.....Can you pierce his [the intelligent citizen's] armour of stolid indifference by arguments about the principle of evolution and the survival of the fittest?.....The improbability that ancient creeds should simply survive must, therefore, depend upon other conditions than the increase of the average intelligence.....I would not conceal my own views, but neither would I feel anxious to thrust them upon others; and for the very simple reason that conversion appears to me to

truths which they impugn. They think they can, by mere assertion, overthrow results arrived at by the life-long inquiries of the ablest student, while they have not given a day's serious or impartial study to them. They fancy that even the ignorant, if only they be what is called orthodox, are justified in strong denunciation of men quite as truthful, and often incomparably more able than themselves. Off-hand dogmatists of this stamp, who usually abound among professional religionists, think that they can refute any number of scholars, however profound and however pious, if only they shout 'Infidel' with sufficient loudness."

be an absurdity. You cannot change a man's thoughts about things as you can change the books in his library."[1] With all due respect to the late Sir Leslie Stephen, I contend that there is one gigantic fallacy underlying this argument. He forgets, or appears to forget, that beliefs are built upon premises, the errors in which one may be able to demonstrate absolutely without having to enter into learned dissertations on the principle of evolution. He declares that he does not wish to underrate, but he certainly does underrate, modern progress. Surely the average shopkeeper or artisan of the present day is capable of understanding that practically nothing is left of the foundations upon which his forefathers built their beliefs; that they have crumbled away under the influence of a knowledge that was not in the possession of the contemporaries of Cæsar or St. Paul? "The laws of thought," as Herbert Spencer says, "are everywhere the same, and the ideas of a rational being are, under the conditions in which they occur, rational."[2] It is ignorance, coupled with superstition, that is at the root of all the different beliefs of mankind. Superstition may remain,[3] though even this may be questioned, considering that people brought up from their childhood as Agnostics are wholly devoid of any superstitious instinct. Ignorance can in any case be dispelled, and if this does not actually destroy belief, at least it will alter it. Even the working man will not remain satisfied with a theology which maintains the

[1] *An Agnostic's Apology*, pp. 131, 133, 138. (Watts & Co., 6d.)
[2] Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, p. 98, "The Data of Sociology."
[3] If superstition were a useful adjunct in the process of character-building, the Russian should be a model of virtue. Also, how is it that a Christian Theocratic Government violates the principle of freedom of the person, of thought, and of the conscience?

necessity for a foundation of facts, and yet is unable to prove them. Therefore, confident of the utility, let us unravel all that is clearly false in belief, and disseminate the result of our investigations among our fellows. In this way, men who are in all essentials seeking the same goal may be led to pursue, if not the same path, yet at least convergent paths. The common sophisms that it is useless to inquire too deeply into beliefs, as you will never arrive at the absolute truth, and that you will never get two men to think alike, account for much of the prevalent indifference. Absolute truth may always remain beyond the ken of man; but that is no reason why he should not go on trying to get as near it as possible, and the first step is the elimination of untruth.

7. CAN BELIEFS BE USEFUL THOUGH FALSE?

It is strange to find non-Christians arguing that the persistence of the Christian belief is a sign of its utility; it is no more so than it is of its truth. Christianity did not make good men what they are, but good men have made Christianity what it is. Besides, a false belief cannot possibly serve a good purpose after its real character has become known. Mr. Fielding urges[1] that whatever exists, whatever persists, does so because it fills a want, because it is of use. He points his argument by alluding to the fact that when anything is useless it atrophies, and he instances how the snake and the whale have lost their legs, human kind their hairy skin and keener sense of smell, and so on. In this simile he is making an assertion which begs the question. He assumes that

[1] In his book, *The Hearts of Men.*

supernatural belief is not an atrophied organ; the Rationalist contends that it is, and that it has been proved to be so. Belief, indeed, is strikingly analogous to an organ which, owing to its having no further useful purpose, has atrophied and become rudimentary. It may have served some purpose in bygone ages; but now, in its present state, it is a source of weakness, like the splint bone of a horse—or rather of danger, like the vermiform appendage of man. The analogy fortunately does not hold good in every respect, for a false belief is an appendage of human nature which can be safely, though perhaps not always painlessly, removed. Indeed, it is an open question whether all religion (in its theological sense) is not "an unessential quality which has been mechanically attached to it, and which, consequently, it may at any time throw off without experiencing any serious loss."[1]

8. IS A NEW RELIGION[2] REQUIRED?

If the latter be a correct estimate of the place religion occupies in man's nature, it furnishes a reply to one of the objections to Agnostic propaganda—the objection that, before we discard an existing belief, we must be prepared to substitute a new belief in its place. It is this objection that has given rise to those speculative philosophies which the common

[1] See art. "Is Man by Nature Religious?" by H. Dundas, in *The Agnostic Annual* for 1906.

[2] We are speaking now, remember, of a religion such as the Christian faith, one involving a belief in the supernatural, and not of religion as Professor Huxley defined it—"a reverence and love for the ethical ideal, and the desire to realise that ideal in life." We are not speaking of a mere ethical "binding" between man and man, of a religion free from all theology, such as Comte's "Positivism."

sense of the vast majority has rightly decided are unsatisfactory; a decision that the Church has not unnaturally seized upon as a triumphant vindication of the truth of Christianity.

Against this objection to militant Rationalism, this plea for silence, I may be permitted to enter my protest in the weighty words of a well-known writer. "It is alleged," says the author of *Supernatural Religion*, "that, before existing belief is disturbed, the iconoclast is bound to provide a substitute for the shattered idol. To this we may reply that speech or silence does not alter the reality of things. The recognition of truth cannot be made dependent on consequences, or be trammelled by considerations of spurious expediency. Its declaration in a serious and suitable manner to those who are capable of judging can never be premature. Its suppression cannot be effectual, and is only a humiliating compromise with conscious imposture. In so far as morality is concerned, belief in a system of future rewards and punishments, although of an intensely degraded character, may, to a certain extent, have promoted observance of the letter of the law in darker ages, and even in our own times; but it may, we think, be shown that education and civilisation have done infinitely more to enforce its spirit. How far Christianity has promoted education and civilisation, we shall not here venture adequately to discuss. We may emphatically assert, however, that whatever beneficial effect Christianity has produced, has been due, not to its supernatural dogmas, but to its simple morality. Dogmatic theology, on the contrary, has retarded education and impeded science.....Even now the friction of theological resistance is a constant waste of intellectual

power.....The choice of a noble life is no longer a theological question, and ecclesiastical patents of truth and uprightness have finally expired. Morality, which has ever changed its complexion and modified its injunctions according to social requirements, will necessarily be enforced as part of human evolution, and is not dependent on religious terrorism or superstitious persuasion. If we are disposed to say: *Cui bono?* and only practise morality, or be ruled by right principles, to gain a heaven or escape a hell, there is nothing lost, for such a grudging and calculated morality is merely a spurious imitation which can as well be produced by social compulsion."[1] "If," as George Eliot once pithily remarked, "you feel no motive to common morality but a criminal bar in heaven, you are decidedly a man for the police on earth to keep their eye upon."

9. WHY BE SO IMPATIENT OF ERROR?

There is one more argument against militant rationalism which demands our attention. "Why should we be so impatient of error?" asks Sir Leslie Stephen. "The enormous majority of the race has, on any hypothesis, been plunged in superstitions of various kinds, and, on the whole, it has found that it could thrive and be decently happy and contented in its ignorance. Science declines to accept catastrophes; and no catastrophe would be more startling than a sudden dispersal of the mists that have obscured the human intelligence for so many ages. If they grow a little thinner in our time, we

[1] Quoted from pp. 169–171 of *A Reply to Dr. Lightfoot's Essays.*

may well be content; but is it not childish to be impatient about the rate of development of these vast secular processes? Why be in such a hurry to 'change the errors of the Church of Rome for those of the Church of the Future'?"[1] I hope I have already answered this question to the satisfaction of some at least of my readers. I have shown that there is a very real danger in further concealment—in keeping up the farce. But let this pass. The reason why we should be impatient of error—why the truth should be told—is that the elimination of error will usher in an era of greater happiness.

In order that we may the more clearly perceive this, I shall now conclude this book with a rapid survey of the arguments for Rationalism.

§ 4. *The Outlook.*

When Rationalism reigns supreme:—

1. Morality will be founded on a firm basis. Its origin and necessity being better understood, it will also be better practised, whether in commerce, in politics, or in our social relations—*i.e.*, both in our public and in our private conduct. Also the present atmosphere of religious insincerity will be cleared. Relieved of this temptation to deceive our neighbour and even ourselves, our moral fibre will be strengthened, and we shall be far less likely to be hypocrites in other matters.

2. Social evils will stand a better chance of being redressed.

3. All religious intolerance will disappear once and for all.

[1] *An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 137.

4. An era of peace and happiness may at last be realised, because the methods for its attainment will be scientific and rational. We shall also come to recognise the fact that a gospel which proclaims a sword and eternal damnation cannot at the same time be a gospel of good tidings, cannot bring "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men."

It may be said that such optimism is absurd, but is it really so?

Morality.—Have we not seen[1] that morality can be taught apart from belief, and, indeed, that it is better so taught? May we not reasonably expect, therefore, that morality will advance side by side with Rationalism? In the famous words of Kant, "The death of dogma is the birth of morals." Our moral progress has not been checked by the machinations of devils, but rather by our belief in such personages. Also by our ignorance—ignorance of the origin and purpose of morality, ignorance of the true causes of immorality, ignorance of the laws of heredity and environment. Science is the good fairy who will assist moral weaklings, and reduce their numbers in succeeding generations. Supernatural religion was perhaps a phase through which humanity had to grope towards the light of reason and knowledge. "But we are now facing the dawn of that better and happier day, when piety shall be confined within the sphere of the natural, when morals shall be looked upon and cultivated as essential conditions of a truly blessed social life, and when all mankind shall aim, not at imaginary happiness in a purely imaginary realm, but at real prosperity in a profoundly real

[1] In Chap. VII., pp. 311, 315-16, and in Chap. VIII., § 2 and § 3 (3) and (4).

world. This would be the exaltation, not destruction, of morality; the glorification, not annihilation, of the sense of responsibility; the enthronement, not repudiation, of the joy of altruistic service."[1]

Social Problems.—"The test of Christianity is," Canon Wilson informs us, "the resolve and the power of Christians to solve social problems. If the Bible inspires Christians with the zeal and the wisdom and the love needed for this task, no one will dispute its claim to be verily 'the Word of God.'"[2] This inspiration to improve the lot of our fellow-creatures furnishes, we are told, the final test of the Bible's truth. We are entitled to ask, therefore, How comes it that the inspiration has hitherto so signally failed to manifest itself? To give an example from history, did not slavery flourish side by side with the Christian Church? Was it not abolished only when the growth of modern science and modern thought caused men's hearts to rebel against its cruelty and injustice? The Church is at last devoting more attention to social evils and to the removal of their causes.[3] What has taught her this duty, if it be not the growing spirit of philanthropic Rationalism? The Church has been forced, as it were, to keep pace with the rise of Rationalism. It is her only chance of prolonging her existence. Her new attitude in this respect will undoubtedly be the means of confusing the issue—the truth of Christianity—for some years

[1] Quoted from p. 27 of *The Agnostic Annual* for 1906.

[2] These are the concluding words of a lecture delivered in the Central Hall, Manchester. The lecture is incorporated with others in a book entitled *Is Christianity True?* (Charles H. Kelly, 26, Paternoster Row, E.C.; 6d.).

[3] We may note, in passing, that it is two of her less orthodox members, Dr. Barnardo and "General Booth," who have come to the front in this good work.

to come. Therefore it is that, while thankful for the improvement, it is our bounden duty to expose the real truth of the matter—to see that Rationalism is not robbed of its meed of praise, that the merit of the improvement is ascribed to its proper source. Undoubtedly the progress of Rationalism will ultimately involve important changes in political institutions and philosophic theories; but it is the beneficent changes in social customs and ethical sentiment which cannot be wrought too soon.

Religious Tolerance.—Have we not seen[1] that religious intolerance has been the evil genius which throughout the history of Christianity has been an enemy of progress and a lively cause of strife and misery? "The Christian Church has been more cruel and shed more human blood than any other Church or institution in the world. Let the Jew alone bear witness among the crowd of victims."[2] Also, Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have

[1] History is repeating itself to-day, and my previous allusions to the present situation in Russia are all too brief. I would ask my readers kindly to put to themselves the following crucial questions: To what party do the religious bigots and their partisans belong? Is it not to the reactionary party, the party that sets its face against reform? On what do the reactionaries chiefly rely for the retention of their hold upon the bulk of the people? Is it not on a peasantry wallowing in ignorance and steeped in superstition? What are the actual instruments employed for maintaining their power? Do they not consist of corrupt officials and cruel Cossacks? Who are responsible for shameless acts of persecution, and, indeed, very largely for all the bloodshed, strife, and anarchy? Is it not the orthodox Church and her supporters? Is it too much to say, with the Rev. J. Lawson-Forster, that "the Russian Church has become the tool of murderers"? (Mr. Lawson-Forster expressed himself in these words when presiding at the great public meeting held at the Brondesbury Synagogue to protest against the recent outrages in Russia.) To what party do the Freethinkers belong? Are they not all, everyone of them, adherents of the party desirous of reform and of religious toleration?

[2] Quoted from a sermon preached by the Rev. Charles Voysey at the Theistic Church, October 22nd, 1905.

inflicted far greater severities on each other than they have ever experienced from the zeal of infidels.[1]

> Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded
> That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

Even now, despite the rise and influence of Rationalism in Europe, "racial and religious prejudice are certainly present among us, and they form a latent source of cruelty and injustice which can at any time, if we are weak enough or wicked enough to give it free play, stain the land with the most amazing oppressions."[2]

We may never entirely agree on questions that are for the present at least shrouded in mystery; but, though the old adage, "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*," may remain true for all time, wide differences of opinion will disappear, and with them the *odium theologicum*. There can only be intolerance where belief is dogmatic, and *that* the religion of the future will never be. The uncertainty, the reasons why others may not be able to accept this or that philosophic speculation, will be recognised. If any discoveries await us, we are sure, at all events, that they will not confirm a dogma that would consign the greater portion of the human race to unspeakable and eternal torment; they will not confirm Christ's description of the Last Judgment, when the Son of Man is to say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." It is cruel doctrines of this kind that have arrested the growth of love and pity, and Rationalism is therefore the sworn enemy of such doctrines, as well

[1] See Gibbon's *Rome*, p. 257, vol. ii. (ed. 1809).

[2] This warning was pronounced by Canon Henson on November 16th, 1905, when commenting, in St. Paul's Cathedral, upon the Russian atrocities.

as of the religious intolerance which springs from them.

Peace.[1]—In an address by the late Archbishop of Canterbury, when Bishop of London, delivered at the Polytechnic, Regent Street,[2] we are presented with an argument of Christian apologetics, the weight of which rests upon the presumption that Christ did not wish the Church to begin with any bloodshed! "It is sometimes questioned," said Dr. Temple, "by those who would throw discredit upon the narrative, that our Lord tells them [the disciples] to go into Galilee, and yet He intended to see them that evening. But the whole thing is perfectly clear to those who consider the circumstances. Our Lord appeared to them in the evening, and there can be no doubt that He intended to do so even when He told these women that they were to desire all the disciples to go down into Galilee. But it was of great importance that there should be no gathering of the disciples in Jerusalem, because the inevitable result would have been an alarm on the part of the Jews, and Pontius Pilate would have been compelled, in order to keep the city perfectly quiet, to disperse such an assembly by force; and it is likely enough that the Church would have begun with bloodshed. But our Lord did not choose to have any such beginning. He told them all to go into Galilee." Are there any grounds for this presumption, any grounds for presuming that God ever wishes to prevent bloodshed? None whatever from a study of history. None whatever from a study of the Bible. None whatever from a study of Christ's own words: "Think not that I am come to

[1] See also Chap. VII., p. 281, note.
[2] On Sunday, April 13th, 1890.

send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Look at the present time! "We live in a time," exclaims the Kaiser,[1] "in which every young German capable of bearing arms must be ready to step forward for his Fatherland." "The signs of the times make it the duty of the nation to strengthen its defences against unrighteous attacks."[2] "History, viewed as a whole," says Major Stewart Murray,[3] warningly, "is nothing but a succession of struggles for existence among rival nations, in which, in the long run, only the strong armed survive." Similar notes of warning

[1] At a gala banquet at Dresden, October 25th, 1905.

[2] Taken from the Emperor's speech at the opening of the Reichstag, November 28th, 1905. N.B.—Christian nations distrust one another's righteousness even when the State and the Church are united and the rulers are defenders of the Faith. It may be noted also that at the swearing-in of the recruits of the Potsdam garrison on November 14th, 1905, they were told to "make the crucifix their Generalissimo"!

[3] In his book, *The Peace of the Anglo-Saxons*, with an Introduction by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G. (Watts & Co.). If Major Murray had stopped short at offering us a somewhat highly coloured picture of the past and present conditions ruling among Christian nations, and at inculcating the necessity of our being in readiness to face the inevitable, few of us would be found to quarrel, in the main, with his conclusions. But when he tells us that "Peace never has been, and *never will be* [italics are mine], as long as the passions of mankind endure, more than a lull between the storms of war," then the better-informed and peace-loving Rationalist will beg to differ with him. He feels that this gospel of universal hatred is being carried too far. Never is a very long time. Major Murray says: "No great nation will ever submit to arbitration any interest that it regards as absolutely vital." Did not our British forefathers think, and with more reason, that "men of honour" could only settle their disputes by the duel? May we not trust that the decisions of learned and unbiassed judges will be equitable, and therefore that their acceptance will redound to the honour of the great nations concerned? Now that we have learnt more of the secrets of nature—of her crude and cruel processes—are we tamely going to acquiesce and make no use of our knowledge? Now the nature of the disease has been diagnosed and now the proper remedies have been discovered, shall we not set about the cure? Nature is, as Major Murray reminds us, red in tooth and claw. But science is humane, and is able to harness nature. Let us therefore transfer our allegiance from the latter to the former.

are echoing and re-echoing through the length and breadth of Christendom. Is this no reflection upon Christianity's power for good? Look at the picture! Christian nations all armed to the teeth, with their "powder dry" and their "swords keen," each distrustful of the other, each ready to spring at the other's throat.

What has the Rationalist to say to this state of things? What remedy does he propose to apply? The prophets foretell that we can look forward to the abolition of war only when the engines of destruction are of so fearful a nature that it will at last be brought home to mortals that this clumsy and barbarous machine for settling disputes is too absurd, too suicidal for further employment. But need we wait long weary years, burdened with the thousand and one cares of war and militarism,[1] till this supreme horror has been invented?

In the resolution adopted at the Fourteenth Peace Congress[2] we find the following stirring appeal: "We are beginning to understand that the rights of the citizen within the State can only be fully respected when, by the establishment of international juridical order, absolute security shall be obtained for all nations. The demand for this international security is becoming daily more urgent, on the one hand because modern progress binds together millions of the most diverse interests, on the other hand because the stream of democracy, or what it would be more proper to call the aspirations of the masses of the

[1] Apart from the extra burden on the workers, does the Church, I wonder, ever thoroughly realise the inevitable effect on public morality of keeping a large body of men from living a normal domestic life?

[2] Held in Lucerne on September 19th–23rd, 1905.

people after happiness, is rising continually in an immense and irresistible flood. International security can only be assured by federation; so federation will come about, for it is indispensable as liberty to the citizen, as air to the lungs. But it behoves us to see that it comes before we are laid in the tomb. What we ought to labour for with an unresting ardour is that federation should be accomplished while we are yet alive, so that we may not be thwarted of the legitimate share of happiness that belongs to us here below." Yes, this strikes the right chord; but before the hopes of these peace enthusiasts can be fulfilled Rationalism must have advanced considerably further than it has up to the present. The methods of Rationalism for lessening the "struggle for existence" run counter in many respects to the teachings of the Church; but even where they do not, she prefers not to interest herself in them.[1] For this among other cogent reasons I conceive that it behoves us to see that the truth about Christianity be known "before we are laid in the tomb," and that "what we ought to labour for with an unresting ardour" is that this "should be accomplished while we are yet alive, so that we may not be thwarted of the legitimate share of happiness that belongs to us here below."

[1] Though it may be a long time before our efforts are rewarded, is that any reason for not making a commencement in the right direction? Let me give an instance. The effort now being made to popularise the international language "Esperanto" is one such commencement. Could not the Church spare a little of her military ardour (exhibited in the arm-chair and pulpit) for supporting peaceful projects of this nature? This one, at any rate, among the many to be found on the Rationalist programme, is not contrary to her teaching; but I have not as yet heard of any ecclesiastical support to a scheme that will undoubtedly conduce to a better acquaintance between the peoples of different nationalities. It is Rationalist and liberal-minded philanthropists who are at present chiefly interested in the movement. The Church has hardly noticed it as yet, much less bestowed her blessing upon it.

The close association of war and religion has never ceased to act for the injury of mankind. The "Lord of Hosts," the "Lord mighty in battles," is expected to take interest in bloodshed rather than in the pursuits of peace, and to be always ready to join in the fray—to fight for His People; both sides, be it remembered, claiming His assistance.[1] True, Christianity owns as its Master, a Prince of Peace; but in no particular has its failure in practice been more marked than in its impotency to carry out this, one of its chief missions.[2] Why? Is it not because it

[1] A parody appearing in an evening paper on November 29th, 1901, conveys a wholesome lesson on this subject. "Lest we forget," I quote it at length:—

PROCESSIONAL.

Lord God of Battles, whom we seek
  On clouds and tempests throned afar,
When tired of being tamely weak,
  We Maffick into deadly war;
If it should chance to be a sin,
At least enable us to win.

Give to the Churches faith to pray
  For what they know they shouldn't ask,
And such abounding grace that they
  May cheerfully perform the task;
Wave flags and loyally discount
That fatal Sermon on the Mount.

Give to the people strength to be
  Convinced all happens for the best,
To see the thing they wish to see,
  And prudently ignore the rest;
So priest and people shall combine
To gain their ends, and call them Thine.

[2] "In no field of its work," exclaims Mr. Andrew Carnegie, "does the Christian Church throughout the whole world—with outstanding individual exceptions—so conspicuously fail as in its attitude to war. Its silence when outspoken speech might avert war, its silence during war's sway, its failure during days of peace to proclaim the true Christian doctrines regarding the killing of men, give point to the recent arraignment of the Prime Minister, who declared that the Church to-day busied itself with questions which did not weigh even as dust in the balance compared with the vital problems with which it was called upon to deal." (See reports of the ceremony at which Mr. Carnegie was installed as Rector of St. Andrew's University.) A

has always meddled in politics, always supported rulers in their ambitions, in their land-hunger? Is it not because religion has too often submitted to be "a 'kept' priest to bless or ban as the passion or self-interest of its employer dictated."[1]

It is as futile as it is insincere for a Tsar[2] to preach peace, when he, or rather his counsellors, are imbued with a hunger for other people's property, and, hypocrites that they are, hide their real motives under a cloak of religion — the spreading, forsooth, of a Christian civilisation. Every Rationalist, every Freethinker, is an honest advocate of peace.[3] He is not so irrational, so immoral I

learned Buddhist monk, on being told by a missionary that nations of the West had become powerful because of their Christianity, replied: "The fact is that nations have become powerful in the degree to which they have rejected the precepts of Christianity, in the extent to which they have substituted for the Christian maxim of 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' that other Maxim which shoots 300 bullets a minute!" Many causes wholly apart from the profession of the Christian faith have led to the present predominance of the West; but the Buddhist monk certainly hit upon one contributory cause which should have afforded the missionary food for reflection.

[1] See Mr. (now the Right Hon.) Augustine Birrell's suggestive article, "Patriotism and Christianity," in the *Contemporary Review*, February, 1905.

[2] The Tsar is probably sincere in his professions, and is the helpless tool of his advisers. Can we make the same excuse for another potentate—for him of the "mailed fist"?

[3] Note these lines by an eminent divine and great dignitary of the Church, Archbishop Alexander, of Armagh:—

> And when I know how noble natures form under the red rain of war, I deem it true
> That he who made the earthquakes and the storm perchance made battle too.

And these by the gentle Wordsworth, the poet of sweet simplicity:—

> But Thy most dreaded instrument
> In working out a pure intent
> Is man—array'd for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter!

And compare: "The very ideas and efforts which have led men to struggle against the Papal Church are exactly those which are exorcising the demon of militarism from the soul of France" (*Contemporary*

might say, as to propose the settlement of disputes by arbitration, and at the same time to entertain nefarious projects calculated to render this method impracticable. So long as Christian nations remain unmindful of the Tenth Commandment, he acknowledges with sorrow that we must continue armed and ready to do battle; but he looks forward[1] with confidence to the day when there will be such an overwhelming body of men earnestly and sincerely desirous of peace that war will be impossible, simply because the preponderating voice of each and every nation will be against it—will "seek peace and ensue it." He anticipates a time when men will realise that they are not only citizens

Review for January, 1905, art. "France and Rome"). Or again the following, reported in the daily papers lately: "A petition to stop the war between Russia and Japan owes its inception to Signor Carlo Romissi, Deputy and editor of the *Secolo* of Milan. The petition has penetrated into every workshop, household, and school, and roused the people to a passionate desire for peace, not only between the belligerents in the Far East, but between all nations." The *Secolo* is the most widely-read Freethought paper in Italy. During the Boer War one was continually hearing declamations from the pulpit to the effect that war is a necessary evil. For instance, the Bishop of Calcutta actually advocated war on the ground that it was a means of keeping a nation virile. Has the Boer war made us more virile? Whatever Imperial necessity there may have been for it, owing to blunders in the past and the existing condition of affairs, the certain effects of it, so far as we can see, have been the untimely destruction of some of the flower of our race, sorrow spread throughout the length and breadth of the land through bereavements, the burden of a great debt, and the unemployed question rendered more acute than ever.

[1] "The brotherhood of man is a long way off—it may never be reached; but as an ideal it is better worth having than that of half-a-dozen sullen empires, trading only within their own boundaries, and shut up behind high tariff walls over which they peer suspiciously, scanning one another's exports and imports with jealous eyes, and making from time to time fawning alliances with one rival, while harbouring enmity with another, maintaining millions of men under arms and spending millions of pounds in armaments, and all the time waiting, waiting, waiting for an affrighted sun to rise upon the day of Armageddon.....But nobler things lie before us and a brighter dawn." (See Mr. Birrell's article, "Patriotism and Christianity," in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1905.)

of this or that country, but citizens also of the same planet.

§ 5. *Concluding Remarks.*

An eminent theologian tells us: "Reason is the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even Revelation itself."[1] How is it, then, that Religionist and Rationalist arrive at such contrary conclusions? The explanation is simple enough: the Religionist trusts, the Rationalist distrusts, his emotions. Which is in the right? The survival of religious belief will largely depend upon the view men may ultimately take upon this question. Whether religion be no more than "morality touched by emotion," as Matthew Arnold defines it, or whether all religions are only other ways of expressing a reality which transcends experience and correct expression, we cannot, on that account, accept dogmas that are untrue; we cannot pretend that a supernatural revelation has been vouchsafed to us. We may surmise, as Sir Henry Thompson supposed, that the "eternal and infinite energy behind phenomena" is what we call "God"; but we have to admit that this God is an unknown God, and that all attempts to unravel the mystery that surrounds our own fate are the merest guesses in the dark. Does a surmise—a belief if you will have it so—of this kind afford any religious satisfaction? If this Eternal Energy possesses what we should call a mind, can we worship a Supreme Intelligence

> Which stoops not either to bless or ban,
> Weaving the woof of an endless plan?

[1] Butler, *Analogy*, pt. ii, 3. Quoted on the title-page of one of the latest contributions to apologetic literature, *Pro Fide*, by the Rev. Charles Harris, B.D.

Can we worship the Unknown? Can we, like the Athenians of old, erect altars to the Unknown God? I trow not. The age of ignorance and superstition is passing away, never again to return.

Sir Oliver Lodge believes[1] in "the ultimate intelligibility of the universe," and with this opinion many of us will agree. Perhaps our present brains may require considerable improvement before we can grasp the deepest things by their aid, or perhaps they may suffice as they are, and only a further acquisition of knowledge may be required. In any case, one sees no reason why, because we have no acceptable theory of life or of death now, we must therefore be equally ignorant many centuries, or even a single century, hence. On the other hand, it is, of course, quite possible that these mysteries may remain for ever unexplained. It may transpire that Haeckel's assumption of a monism in the physical world, and his identification of vital force with ordinary physical and chemical forces, are incorrect. It may transpire that Professor le Conte was wrong in regarding vital force as so much force withdrawn from the general fund of chemical and physical forces. Radio-activity and the cyanic theory[2] may not furnish a satisfactory solution of the problem of the first appearance of life upon this globe. But one thing, at all events, our present knowledge seems clearly to indicate: the solution of the problem cannot be in accord with the Christian dogmas. Should the secrets of our existence still lie

[1] See p. 183 of *The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1905.

[2] Compounds of cyanogen have a close resemblance to living matter. As cyanogen is only produced at an intense heat, it is surmised that the living substance may have been produced once and for all when the earth was incandescent.

concealed in the womb of time, their birth will be the death, not the renascence, of the dying creeds of to-day.

Meanwhile our proper course now is clearly defined: we should search out and expose all *false* premises of belief. Only in this way can we hope to arrive a little nearer to the ultimate truth. Also, what is of much greater consequence, when all that is demonstrably untrue in the world's beliefs has been pointed out and acknowledged, believers and unbelievers will be in far better accord concerning all that is vital to the well-being of the human race. "We cannot," as Mr. Trevelyan pertinently remarks, "alter the nature of the Unknown by conceiving it to be other than that which it is; but we can get a wrong basis for ethics, and a false sentimental outlook on everything by reason of false beliefs."[1]

By all means, let those who can, continue to cherish the "larger hope"—why should they not, while all is unknown?—and let the metaphysicians continue to translate their wishes and aspirations into philosophical language; but the guiding spirit in human affairs should be, and one day will be, a scientific humanitarianism working on rational principles for the peace and happiness of all mankind.

[1] P. 887 of *The Independent Review*, December, 1904.

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